

COCHF

CENTRAL ONTARIO CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FEDERATION

presents...

# The 2014 Co-op Service Awards



***“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”***

*Nelson Mandela*

In this brochure, you will find the nominees/recipients of the 2014 *Co-op Service Awards*. This is the ninth year that the awards have been presented by COCHF on behalf of its member co-operatives. With these annual awards, housing co-ops in Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, Guelph and Brantford give recognition to their members and staff who have made a significant contribution to their co-op community or to the greater co-op movement, or made a contribution to the larger community while demonstrating the co-operative principles and values.

Even though the award is presented by COCHF, these individuals have been nominated solely by their own co-ops. This non-competitive award is an opportunity for co-ops to show their appreciation for their nominees’ valued contribution that has made a difference in their communities.

Congratulations from COCHF to all of the nominees/recipients of the 2014 *Co-op Service Awards*.

## Recipients of the 2014 Co-op Service Awards

On the following pages you can read about the following co-op members and staff who have been nominated by their co-ops to receive a *Co-op Service Award* in 2014.

**Carol Fishburn**

**Debbie Whitelaw**

**Dorothy Smith**

**Heather Tonner**

**Kim Burrows**

**Kirk Jewell**

**Matthew Middeljans**

**Mohamed Ally**

**Patricia Abbott**

**Patrick Hunt**

**Paula Verlegh**

**Stephanie Moore**

**Tammy McLeod**

**Terry Gerber**

**Terri Parker**

## **Carol Fishburn**

***Nominated by Bread and Roses Co-operative Homes, Kitchener***

Carol Fishburn passed away on October 6 after a long and interesting life, the last 22-years of which were spent as an active member of Bread and Roses Co-operative Homes. She had a passion for helping people and a passion for learning. She regularly attended sector educational events, including COCHF Conferences and CHF Canada AGMs. She (or rather her persona, "Arthur Itis") was named "Mr. CHF" at one of the annual Glamazon events formerly held in conjunction with the CHF Canada AGM.

Carol served on the Board of Directors and on the Member Selection committee. She had a remarkable memory for the people and events from the early years of Bread and Roses and would often regale staff, members and visitors (including our Member of Parliament, who was visiting to discuss loss of RGI subsidies) with her stories of co-op life.

Former Co-ordinator Sabine Behnk offered the following comments after Carol's passing: "At Bread and Roses, she would be remembered for her fantastic and exuberant lobby art - she would paint seasonal pictures on the lobby windows, which were much appreciated by the membership and visitors. For many years, she co-ordinated the distribution of treats in the lobbies at Halloween, often dressing in costume. A number of years ago, when the co-op was selected to be part of Doors Open Waterloo Region, Carol volunteered to lead tours, and she dressed in period costume. She possessed incredible energy and resilience and a firecracker personality. In the last few years her energy was diminished by her illnesses. Even then, when I talked to her, or watched her do her tours of downtown Kitchener, the spark was always there. Her energy was firmly planted on this earth, and she relished life and sought to share it."

## **Debbie Whitelaw**

***Nominated by Cambridge New Hope Housing Co-operative, Cambridge***

Cambridge New Hope would like to nominate Debbie Whitelaw for the Co-Op Service Award. Debbie is incredibly active in the co-op and is always selflessly donating her time in order to improve the lives of those around her. Debbie is a favorite member of the children who live within the co-op as she is always doing activities that involve the kids such as weekly craft nights, holiday special events and movie nights in the community centre.

The office is constantly indebted to Debbie as her service to the co-op extends to other areas as well. She frequently cleans vacant units to get them ready for new members to move in. She is volunteering her time to distribute newsletters from the office or take on other tasks so that the office has time to deal with other matters. The Coordinator's life has been made much easier thanks to her tireless efforts and offers of help.

There are few people more deserving of this award than Debbie. Her infectious good attitude, love of life and her desire to make Cambridge New Hope a great place to live make her an irreplaceable and outstanding member.

**Dorothy Smith*****Nominated by Westglen Co-operative Homes, Brantford***

Dorothy has worked nonstop for both the Westglen community and the community of Brantford. She often brings her young grandson to play with our children, as our children are fortunate as they have the freedom to play outside as most of us who grow up in the 50s, 60s, and 70s did. Dorothy was able to get our families backpacks and school supplies, as part of the backpack program in Brantford, which is quite the splash. In the fall, she contacts a local shoe retailer, and our parents are able to get nice discounts on good quality shoes and boots for their children. Our community centre is in great need of some redecorating, and Dorothy's church group has volunteered to paint the walls and assist with the annual fall clean up.

You can always find Dorothy out picking up garbage, cutting grass, weeding our wall and other gardens. This summer she managed to inspire members that had never participated to help get the brush cut down behind some of the blocks, which was a big undertaking.

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**Heather Tonner*****Nominated by Clarion Co-operative Homes, Cambridge***

Clarion Co-op is nominating Heather for the service award for the following reasons: Heather continuously assists the co-op office staff with special projects and tasks while also helping to fill the gap during periods where volunteers are unavailable. Heather always volunteers her time and never has to be asked by office staff to help out; and she gives 110% effort every time. Heather is an active member within the co-op community and currently holds the position of Vice President on the Board of Directors. She is heavily involved in the planning of social events as well as maintaining the co-op grounds. Heather also attended the CHF Canada AGM in Ottawa this year and has attended many workshops and meetings on behalf of Clarion in the past. The co-op office staff and the Board of Directors greatly appreciate all of heather's efforts and hard work!

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**Kim Burrows*****Nominated by Emanuel Housing Co-operative, Kitchener***

Emanuel Co-op has nominated Kim to receive the 2014 Co-op service Award. Kim has been an outgoing member of the co-operative since moving in. Kim has been instrumental in helping develop the co-op community at Emanuel. She has organized a spring Clean Up Day, community potluck dinners, summer garage sale, Family Fun day, and she participates in the co-op's semi-monthly newsletter committee. In addition to this, she currently sits on the Board of Directors as the co-op's Treasurer. She is well-deserved to receive this award.

**Kirk Jewell*****Nominated by Royal City Housing Co-operative, Guelph***

Kirk Jewell and his family moved into Royal City Co-op in the summer of 2008, and he hit the ground running. Since that time Kirk has been a strong foundation of the co-op. His commitment as the Maintenance Co-Chair, organizer of the seasonal clean-up days, BBQs, and so much more, has strengthened and built Royal Housing Co-op to the level it is today.

Kirk is the guy who is always there to lend a helping hand; like the day the fridges were delivered, and Kirk made sure it all ran smoothly and everyone got their fridge. He sticks up for the co-op and will let you know if he thinks what is happening isn't in the best interest of 'our home' as he affectionately refers to the co-op. This award serves as a token of our appreciation for all Kirk's efforts and hard work over the years, and for the work he continues to do today.

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**Matthew Middeljans*****Nominated by Max Saltsman Community Co-operative, Cambridge***

When Matthew came on the Board in October of 2013, there was no formal succession plan in place. Despite this, within a matter of a couple months, Matthew began to assume a strong leadership position within his community. He took on the role of Corporate Secretary and has since done a great job of chairing our meetings and leading Board discussions.

Matthew is a team player who works for the collective benefit of all stakeholders, including members, directors and the staff. He is an excellent staff liaison who effectively communicates the Board's directives and the membership's desires to staff. This year he has been involved in jumpstarting some of our committees, such as the maintenance and social committee. He has helped with maintenance around the co-op, including unit repairs and even roadwork. Matthew dedicates at least 30 hours of his time a month to serving his community, going above and beyond his job requirements. He is a good role model for the rest of the membership and a shining example of what selfless service to your community is all about. His example will undoubtedly encourage other members to contribute as well.

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**Mohamed Ally*****Nominated by Willowside Housing Co-operative, Kitchener***

"Ally" moved into Willowside in 2006, and started volunteering from the day he arrived. Ally takes great pride in his co-op and shares his philosophy of "when you see a mess, just clean it up. This is our home and we all should take care of it." Ally is on the recycle team and maintains our lovely gardens. He keeps the move-in room clean and washes out the recycle bins each week. In the winter he clears the walkways. When new members are moving in Ally is the person that assists them with the elevator and makes them feel welcome. Ally is the person that members know they can go to if they need assistance or help with something. Ally is the model member we all want to be, he is helpful, courteous, trustworthy and doesn't like to gossip.

**Patricia Abbott*****Nominated by Fife Road Co-operative Homes, Guelph***

Patricia moved into Fife Road in 1993 and for the next 21 years her commitment has never wavered. Since that time she has been a strong foundation of the co-op. Patricia was elected to the Board the very first year she moved in and acted over the years as Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President and President. As well, Patricia has served as chair of the Maintenance, Member Relations, Member Selection, Social, and Parking committees at various times.

Patricia originally helped with the development of bylaws, and prepared many policies for approval by the Board. She also helped establish the original committees and their terms of reference and job descriptions. It was when death and illness hit Patricia's family that the co-op rallied and it reaffirmed for her why she loves living in the co-op. Everyone showed her kind care and support. That is what co-op living stands for. This award serves as a token of our appreciation for all Patricia's hard work and commitment over the years, and for the work she continues today as President of the Board of Directors.

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**Patrick Hunt*****Nominated by Beaver Creek Housing Co-operative, Waterloo***

Patrick's contribution to Beaver Creek spans two decades. Through his many and unique ways of contributing to co-op life over the years, the most important is his dedication to a healthy democracy. By Patrick's example many have learned what it truly means to live in a democracy. He will consistently tackle sensitive issues when others do not feel the comfort to do so and will challenge ideologies that some consider sacred. At times he has presented arguments for debate that he himself may not agree with but did it to facilitate discussion and cause members to question their own thinking. He believes things should always be questioned to enable the possibility of a clear and well thought out decision.

During his time on the Board he always made sure that all voices had a chance to be heard and did not concern himself with the outcome of a situation but rather that due process was followed. Patrick continues to demonstrate how to behave when a matter may not have gone the way in which he voted. He accepts the group decision and moves forward.

Patrick has always had a soft spot for the underdog and is not afraid to stand up for what he believes is right. He shares his tenacity and joy of life with many members of the community no matter in which project he decides to take part. Throughout his many years of service on the Finance and Social committees Patrick has brought a great deal of colour to the co-op. From face painting for the kids to making the community breakfast on his birthday to his storytelling on Hallow's Eve at the gazebo, Patrick has a way of leaving his mark on your heart.

Through his ongoing efforts and examples of how to live well in community with others he has helped shape Beaver Creek into the thriving community that it is today. Beaver Creek is pleased to be able to honour his gifts through this COCHF award. Thank you Patrick!

## **Paula Verlegh**

***Nominated by Shamrock Co-operative Homes, Waterloo***

Paula Verlegh has been the President of Shamrock Co-op for over three years and has been on the Board for the past nine years. For the past two years she has worked diligently by revising and producing new policies and procedures for Shamrock Co-op. This has taken many hours for her to complete and without her hard work, this could not have been accomplished in a timely manner. She is currently still working on new policies that will be beneficial for our co-op. Our members and staff are truly grateful for her dedication to our co-op. She has lived at the co-op since 1995 and is a real asset to our co-op.

## **Stephanie Moore**

***Nominated by Cahiague Co-operative Homes, Brantford***

Stephanie goes above and beyond with her participation at Cahiague. She single-handedly completed 48 unit inspections, completed a per unit file of all items down to the tiniest details and then completed a master worksheet outlining the condition of each and every item in each unit. Stephanie worked endlessly on assisting with the preparation for our 30 years of Incorporation party from making signs, picking up supplies, wrapping donations, organizing events, MCing the event, set up and clean up just to mention a few.

Stephanie helped organize the video for the Co-operators National Co-op Challenge and promoted it daily to all her contacts on different social media groups. Stephanie is always available to meet with contractors and help schedule work to be completed as well as dealing with general member maintenance issues and delivery of flyers and office correspondence. Stephanie demonstrates the true meaning of community participation and takes great pride in the community in which she lives.

## **Tammy McLeod**

***Nominated by Changemakers Co-operative Homes, Kitchener***

Tammy McLeod IS the Kids Committee and except for a few brief interludes when there have been a few others who helped, she has always been the Kids Committee. It is always so frustrating when we all know there is a need for a committee so we form said committee only to find that only one person will remain over time to do what is required of the committee. This is Tammy and our Kids Committee.

It is for her work in this capacity that the Board at Changemakers has nominated Tammy McLeod, but there is more. Life's been rough on most of us from time to time, but Tammy's bright countenance and energetic spark make her the overall choice for this recognition. For the Board at Changemakers, it was a 'no brainer'. She also has been known to assist on other events as well, such as 'clean-up days' and 'family days', and works closely with our social committee when it is needed. Recently, Tammy has enrolled in co-op education training sessions and shows no signs of slowing down. She is a true example of what a co-op member is.

**Terri Parker**

***Nominated by Cole Road Co-operative Community, Guelph***

Terry has been a member of Cole Road for 14 years. She has served as President of the Board and has been on various committees including member selection, social and personnel. She has recently taken on the stewardship of our community garden. She continues to be an active member and is very deserving of this award and recognition.

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**Terry Gerber**

***Nominated by Grandview Co-operative Homes, Cambridge***

Grandview would like to nominate Terry Gerber for the Co-Op Service Award. Terry is a relatively new member of Grandview, but in the short time he has been here he has made a vast impact on the property and with the members. Terry has single handed been taking care of the landscaping for the whole property, cutting lawns, cleaning the grounds and small outdoor maintenance projects. Terry also makes sure the garbage is cleaned up and put out at the proper times so the property always looks clean and inviting.

In addition, Terry often assists with cleaning units and getting them ready for new members to move into. Any task that is put before him he delves right into and often will bring a pre-emptive plan to the office to get ahead of the season. He will make himself available to members any time he can, and members know he is someone they can rely on.

Grandview is lucky to have a member like Terry, and the property would not be the same without him.

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## The Co-operative Principles

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which housing co-operatives put their values into practice.

### **1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership**

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

### **2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control**

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In housing co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote).

### **3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute financially to their co-operative and share in the benefits of membership. A housing co-op does not pay a return on the members' shares and deposits – instead it sets aside reserves for the future and charges the members only what it needs to operate soundly.

### **4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence**

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. They follow the laws that apply to them, and their agreements with governments or other organizations. But, the members control the co-op.

### **5th Principle: Education, Training and Information**

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, directors, and employees so they can play a full role in the life of the co-op. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

### **6th Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives**

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

### **7th Principle: Concern for Community**

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities inside and outside the co-op. They help to improve the quality of life for others and they take care to protect the environment.



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