

Celebrating outstanding efforts

Community Living gives kudos to residents' personal achievements

BY ANDY COMBER

The achievements of community citizens and employees were recognized at the 46th Annual General Meeting of Community Living Essex County held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in McGregor, June 19.

"We are making tremendous progress," said Mike Groot, board president for Community Living, speaking about the organization that provides resources and support for individuals with an intellectual disability across Essex County.

Greetings were delivered by Essex MPP Bruce Crozier and Essex Mayor Ron McDermott.

"It is a great big family at Essex Community Living," Crozier said.

"It is another year gone and we have many goals and are getting closer to those goals," McDermott said. "Barriers down, citizenship up!"

Craig Demers, Jessica Martin, Gerald Lemire, and Devon Grabb, each from a county region supported by Community Living, were recognized with an Outstanding Achievement Award for their personal achievement and contributions to their communities.

Demers, a resident of Essex, was recognized for his many accomplishments completed "in a short time" since his move to the community last fall after living 40 years at the Southwestern Regional Centre.

Called a "helpful, diligent, kind, courteous, and respectful" citizen, Demers has a very strong work ethic and has become a positive role model to his co-workers.

Currently, he is a member of the Essex Assembly services and part of a clean-up crew for the Essex Legion.

A graduate of the job readiness class, he also assists with contract work such as recycling and finds time to volunteer, delivering Meals on Wheels to the elderly in the Town of Essex twice a week.

As a member of the Ontario Special Olympics team, Demers excels in speed skating and won two gold medals and a silver at a competition in Owen Sound in February.

Jessica Martin, a Belle River resident, was recognized for her "energy and enthusiasm" at home and in the communities of Tecumseh and Belle River.

Martin works as a recreational assistant at LaChaudiere Retirement Home, and her dedication is very much appreciated by participants and co-workers.

She is currently completing a kitchen preparation class at St. Clair College to acquire skills for the food service industry.

Gerald Lemire was recognized for his volunteer work in the Amherstburg/Harrow area.

He is an employee of Amherstburg Services and also works at the local Royal Canadian Legion. He volunteers for the local mission and won acclaim for his fundraising efforts, participating in the Torch Run and Big Bike Race.

Known for his big smile, Lemire has an exceptional friendship with the Amherstburg Police Service.

Devon Grabb was recognized for his social work and community achievements in the Leamington/Kingsville area.

An employee of the Leamington Shopper, he has recently received his first raise and bonus for a strong work ethic.

Exercise is also a priority for Grabb, who enjoys walks through town, hikes at Point Pelee and visiting with friends at the Sherk Recreation Complex.



Craig Demers of Essex received an Outstanding Achievement Award from Community Living Essex County, presented by manager Lori Huson June 20.

Community Inclusion Awards were presented to Staff Sgt. Tim Berthiaume and Sgt. Mike Cox of the Amherstburg Police Services.

A Media Award was presented to the CBC for a documentary about a family's experience as their children moved from the Southwestern Regional Centre to a new home in Amherstburg.

Three individuals were awarded Anne Stafford Bursary Awards: Ashley Drouillard, Lynne Gignac, and Omer Lafleur.

Twenty employees of Community Living Essex County were recognized for their decades of service.

A special tribute was also made to employees Lee-Anne Dupuis and Anne Garrod, who received resounding applause in recognition of their 25 years of service.

A \$20,000 Kitchen Makeover lottery was announced as a new fundraising initiative.

Community Living Essex County supports more than 500 people who have an intellectual disability so they may live in a state of dignity and share in all elements of their community with an opportunity to participate effectively.

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