

Annette Box: newest addition to Kindness Pillar in city

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It doesn't take much to be kind to others.

Such simple acts as holding the door open for someone, helping someone across the street or talking to total strangers don't take much time or effort.

These things should come naturally to people, believes Annette Box of Belleville.

"It doesn't cost anything to be kind. And I think more people should be kind and make this world a better place to live in," she said.

The 62-year-old Bridge Street East resident was recently honoured as the '2000 Kindness Citizen of the Year' from among the 40 nominations submitted to the Random Act of Kindness Committee in March.

Her name will be added to the Kindness Pillar at the Quinte Mall and the monies collected from the water fountains this year will be donated to the charities of her choice (25 per cent to the Kindness committee itself and the rest to the Quinte Humane Society).

Box is thrilled with the award but she's also humbled by it.

"The people who were nominated probably deserve it even more than I do. But it's a great honour to even be nominated and to win it is an even greater honour.

"Besides, it makes you feel good. You feel like a celebrity."

Being kind is like second nature to Box.

"I like to be kind to people. There is so much violence in the world that we need a lot of kindness to make up for it."

Box believes her nomination stems from something she enjoys doing for others on a regular basis — cutting and perming hair. She refuses to accept money for her services.

She's been doing her own hair and her family's and friends for a number of years. She thinks one of her female golfing friends or neighbours nominated her for the kindness award.

"I make that understood that I will not accept money for that. I do it because I want to. I enjoy cutting and perming hair and it's also a chance for me to visit with people."

Born in Minto, N.B. and raised in nearby Chipman, Box was 16 when she moved to Garson, near Sudbury, with her parents. The family then moved to Toronto.

Box worked for 16 years in Toronto, both at a record company and chartered bank.

She also married and had two children.

After the death of her first husband, Jack, she decided to move to Consecon to be closer to her family "and get both my children out of the big city." That was in the mid-1970s and, in 1978, she married Barry Box and the couple settled in Belleville.

She worked for a local bank and car dealership for a few years before joining Black Diamond Cheese. She spent 10 years with the plant before retiring in January 1992 and taking up golf.

"I stayed home long enough to have kids and then I worked all my life, it seemed. It was time to retire and enjoy the good life," Box said.

Her favourite sport is golf, something she never did until she retired.

"I enjoy being outside and golf gets you outside. It's a great sport and I break 100 now and then and I even beat my husband sometimes," she laughed.

Her winter hobbies include knitting, crocheting and reading.

Box also spends her winters volunteering at Quinte Healthcare Belleville General. She works in the Auxiliary-run coffee bar inside the emergency department one day a week.

"I enjoy meeting people. I'm a people person. That's why I enjoyed all the jobs I had because I was meeting and dealing with the public."

She especially enjoys being kind to others.