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Halton Crime Stoppers volunteer wins Civilian Achievement Award

BY MANDI HARGRAVE

Georgetown's Donna Vettese a volunteer for Halton Crime Stoppers since 2000 was honoured with the Civilian Achievement Award from the Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers.

Vettese was presented with the award at the provincial association's annual meeting and training conference in Sudbury at the end of May.

"I was shocked beyond belief. I had no idea they even submitted my name," said Vettese, Treasurer for Halton Crime Stoppers.

She recalls sitting at the association's luncheon, hearing her name and being so shocked that she just sat in her seat until Glenn Matsuo, Chair of Halton Crime Stoppers said, "That's you." Once she was able to stand up she received a plaque for her volunteer work with Halton Crime Stoppers.

Sgt. Ray Bruce, former coordinator for Halton Crime Stoppers nominated Vettese and in his nomination form said, "She has become an invaluable resource."

"She is the Board's treasurer, and as such, has done an outstanding job. However, 2004 was much more than 'business as

usual' for this dedicated volunteer," his nomination stated.

Last year Vettese raised the bar for future Annual General Meetings (AGM), according to Bruce. She planned and organized the event from start to finish through designing place settings and preparing invitations he said.

"As a direct result of her hard work, it was the most successful AGM to date."

Her next task was to secure a Trillium Foundation grant so that Halton Crime Stoppers could employ a full-time assistant coordinator. In the previous year a professional had been hired to fill out the application and failed. Vettese succeeded because she was able to point out the need for the grant Halton Crime Stoppers had satisfied the requirements of the Trillium

Foundation.

"The \$39,000 grant is the largest grant the program has ever received, and it has made a tremendous difference to Halton Crime Stoppers," stated Bruce.

Vettese's efforts continued when she obtained a grant from the Oakville Community Foundation for a portable sound system, which is used for the new high school presentation program.

Vettese was also dedicated to raising funds for Halton Crime Stoppers new fundraising initiative Ride Against Crime Everywhere (RACE).

"She saw the potential for raising funds and public awareness and, in an effort that was nothing short of inspirational, she ran with it. She single-handedly raised close to 50 per cent of the pledges. Donna doesn't think small when it comes to events like this,

she thinks big," Bruce stated.

"Her support of this event and her commitment to its success went above and beyond, dedicating untold hours to its planning and execution. The resulting benefits to the program are immeasurable."

Every year Vettese organizes the Sears Baseball Tournament barbecue in Burlington. The two-day event in 2004 was the most successful, according to Bruce. He said Vettese makes sure it's more than just a barbecue by securing donations through draws and contests.

In light of all this, Bruce said Vettese continued with her regular board duties in one of the most demanding positions on the board as treasurer, while she "copes with her own personal challenges."

"She has MS, and is caring full time for her cancer-stricken daughter and three grandchildren under the age of 4."

"Donna Vettese is a rare commodity. Dedicated, selfless, persistent and energetic, she puts her all into everything she does for the Board. Halton Crime Stoppers is fortunate to have her and her efforts over the past year, in particular, are worthy of special recognition."



SUBMITTED PHOTO
 Donna Vettese civilian award winner, pictured with Fred Hicks.

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