

Top Volunteers Honoured At Peel Cares Celebration

BRAMPTON: Volunteer MBC held its annual celebration of International Volunteer Day last Wednesday, featuring its new Volunteer of the Year Awards for Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon - recognizing three top volunteers and 22 other outstanding nominees with certificates and lots of gratitude.

"Volunteer MBC just reached a 10-year milestone in serving Peel region," Executive Director Carine Strong observed, adding, "It seemed highly appropriate that we introduce a unique annual award to recognize a truly outstanding volunteer in each municipality. Thanks to award sponsorship by the Mississauga-Cooksville Lions Club, board member Jim Waechter, and the Rotary Club of Bolton, these awards became possible. The response by our member organizations through their nominations gives us every confidence that Peel has a cross-section of volunteers of unsurpassed quality and dedication, who are engaged in a broad spectrum of commu-



Vishal Shrivastava 2018 Volunteer of the Year, Brampton with Sandy Lewis Volunteer MBC

nity service. Our Peel Cares Celebration was a perfect setting for bringing these volunteers into the spotlight."

Non-profit organizations had each nominated one volunteer as their own Volunteer of the Year, and then the Judging Committee—a panel of experienced leaders in the local voluntary sector—evaluated each nomination based upon hours contributed and the impact to the organization internally and in terms of community benefit in

2018. Nominees each contributed hundreds of hours of service, remarkable levels of effort and even specialized skills.

Caledon's recipient, Sarah Spagnol, while in her final year of university, put together a gala fundraiser for Victory House, a fairly new community service organization that operates a supportive home for women. She accomplished this inside of just three months, heading a committee of 20.



Maduba Ahmad 2018 Volunteer of The Year, Mississauga, giving her award acceptance speech.

The event saw 168 in attendance, raised over \$50,000, and secured major supporters to subsequently renovate and fund the charity's physical facilities.

Another deserving Volunteer of the Year was Maduba Ahmad in Mississauga, who achieved wonders for MuslimFest-Festive Currents, one of the largest cultural festivals, held annually at Celebration Square.

In her capacity as Sponsorship and Grants Officer, improved organizational and financial governance and attracted over \$300,000 in support for the 2018 event. Her efforts supported promoting diversity, heritage and intercultural dialogue.

It turned out that in Brampton, Volunteer MBC's very own Vishal Shrivastava was the Judging Committee's selection. He began volunteering with the volunteer centre as part of its referral team, matching volunteers to suitable opportunities, and later used his IT expertise to manage significant analysis and enhancement of the organization's IT systems from concept to execution, particularly its customer relationship management system.

The reception included formal greetings by Gagan Sikand (MP, Mississauga-Streetsville) and Ontario's Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Sylvia Jones (MPP, Dufferin-Caledon), who was present with her message, "Thank you for your years of contributing to our community by encouraging and training volunteers to support local organizations".

The reception included a silent auction and online auction, with funds raised matched by Scotiabank. Proceeds supported Volunteer MBC's community outreach program, Ovation, an initiative that will expand volunteering among residents over 55 years old through raising awareness, training, and support by a core team of volunteer ambassadors. The program is designed to address social isolation, which has been shown to be a major community health issue, especially for older adults.



Peel Cares 2018 Volunteer of the Year Nominees stand behind the Charter of Volunteerism

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