



## MEDIA RELEASE

# Citizen of the Year and Inspiration Award Recipients

**April 20, 2023** – The Council of the Municipality of North Perth was excited to celebrate the return of Volunteer Appreciation Night on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic. The event at the Elma Memorial Community Centre in Atwood saw a great turnout from the community.

In recognition of National Volunteer Week, we would like to extend gratitude to all the volunteers who make our community great. Your service and commitment to community betterment is valued and appreciated by all who call North Perth home.

Please join us in congratulating and recognizing the recipients of the 2022 Norm Stirling Citizen of the Year Award and 2022 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Awards:

### Vince Judge

#### 2022 Norm Stirling Citizen of the Year Award Recipient

Vince is a man of service. Service to his family, his faith and his community. He grew up on a farm near Orangeville and upon high school graduation, studied Radiology in Toronto. Vince relocated to Listowel for a job opportunity and has been a resident since the mid-1960s. He and his late wife Shirley have 3 children, and 7 grandchildren. He became involved in the community early on, coaching local baseball and hockey.

Vince developed an early interest in the local political scene and became involved as a Town Councillor in the early 1970's. Throughout the years, he was elected Reeve, represented Listowel at Perth County Council and went on to serve as Warden of Perth County. Vince served multiple terms as Mayor of Listowel and was the first Mayor of the newly amalgamated Municipality of North Perth. Vince served on numerous municipal boards and committees throughout his municipal career

Over the years, he was involved with several volunteer boards and committees, often serving many years including:

- Huron Perth Children's Aid Society - Board of Directors, including time as President
- Listowel Agricultural Society - more than 35 years, including time as Director
- Listowel Memorial Hospital Foundation
- Listowel Baptist Church – Board of Directors
- North Perth Seniors

Vince served for 40 years on the Maitland Conservation Foundation helping to raise over a million dollars for local conservation areas and projects that benefited the environment in our watershed. Vince continues to be involved by serving on the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee, Community of Character, the North Perth Healthcare Recruitment Committee and the North Perth Family Health Team Board.

Vince seems to know almost everyone in his community, and in return, almost everyone knows him. His career at Listowel Memorial Hospital helped to facilitate this familiarity with people in the community, but Vince also made every effort to attend the activities and events held throughout the community.

## **Hollie & Birdie Chavarria**

### **2022 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipients**

Hollie and Birdie moved to Listowel in 2019 with their daughter, Amelie. Birdie owns and operates the well-loved fresh Mex restaurant - Birdie's Holy Guacamole, and Hollie is the HR Manager at Gray Ridge Egg Farms.

In 2021 they saw a need in the community to celebrate diversity and educate others about all things 2SLGBTQIA+, thus North Perth Pride was born.

Hollie and Birdie, alongside their team, have been heavily involved in getting North Perth Pride off the ground, developing a growing presence within our community. They have put every effort into making North Perth Pride an inclusive part of our community by involving everyone within our local towns. They have given light to something that has previously been in the dark. These two have a growing group behind them and put on a great Pride festival last year, in addition to many other events throughout the year.

## **Sherry Hamilton**

### **2022 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipient**

Sherry has always been passionate about helping others. She regularly gives her time, simply because it makes her happy. Sherry has called Listowel home for the last 20 years and made many connections over the course of her time in this community. She is a mother to 3 children, Candice, Cody and Clint, “Nana” to (soon-to-be) 8 grandchildren, and a Foster mother for the past 15 years.

For more than 15 years she has been a member of the Listowel Legion and was proudly named President in 2019. She is a community leader and supporter, providing a space for seniors, hosting events for families in the community and already ready to assist anyone in need.

Sherry believes “The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others” – DeAnn Hollis.

## **Marybelle Dittmer**

### **2022 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipient**

Marybelle has been a long-time resident of North Perth. She resided in the Monkton area prior to relocating to Listowel in 2004 with her husband and 5 children, including a set of triplets. She was employed at an independent senior living residence for 24 years as the Food Supervisor, responsible for cooking for the residents. Although she retired in 2017, Marybelle offered additional help and was instrumental in keeping the kitchen service open during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since her retirement, she has joined the Board of Directors for Maitland Terrace and has served on the Admissions Committee. She assists with the fire drills and was a key person in the organizing and executing of the recent 35th Anniversary Celebration. Marybelle has also been a volunteer with V.O.N. since 2006, delivering Meals on Wheels, assisting with the congregate dining program, while also volunteering in the office.

Marybelle joined the Listowel Agricultural Society Board of Directors in 2017 and has since been heavily involved. She Co-Chairs the Catering Committee and sits on the Culinary Arts Committee. At Fair time she caters the event, sits on the Church Service Committee and Home Craft Committee. She is also a certified judge and attends other fairs judging their events.

Marybelle has not slowed down during her retirement. What began as a desire for something to keep herself busy has continued as a strong passion for helping others, as she lives by her own motto of giving from the heart. She believes it is important to give back to the community in which you live.

## **Cindy Stevens**

### **2022 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipient**

Cindy is a lifelong resident of North Perth. She was born and raised in Molesworth where her father owned Stevens Garage until he passed away. Cindy now runs a family-owned business of her own and proudly works alongside her two children, Kristin and Brandon, as well as both of her sisters and her niece.

Cindy is one of a kind with a heart of gold and treats everyone like family. The motto of the restaurant is 'Come in for friendly service and leave like family'. She goes out of her way to make sure that others don't go without, supplying meals to the people in need within the community. Cindy is always willing to help, whether it be volunteering her time or using her skills as a business owner to make a difference, she is always looking for ways to give back.

Cindy feels it is important to volunteer in the community to help others in need. "You never know someone's situation, so if you can help in anyway, I feel it is very important to do so. Someday you could be the person in need. I love the fact that I can help support people in this community and change a frown to a smile and make someone's day."

## Background on the Awards

For over 40 years, with roots in Wallace Township, the ***Norm Stirling Citizen of the Year Award*** has been given to residents who have made significant contributions to the welfare and betterment of our community.

The award was established in honour of Norm Stirling. Norm was a forestry foreman with Ontario Hydro who put forth great effort to save farmland when the hydro-line corridor was being proposed.

Norm was one of the heroes of the Listowel Memorial Arena collapse in 1959. In the split second that the roof was falling in, Coach Stirling grabbed and carried two players to the ice and took cover at the north sideboards. All three survived.

In 1966, he was awarded the President's Medal by the National Safety Council for saving a man's life who was overcome by carbon monoxide. Norm also served on the School Board in the Town of Listowel and was Chairman of the Listowel Memorial Hospital Board at the time of his death in 1973 at the age of 46.

Wallace Township set up a Memorial Award in his honour. The tradition of the annual awarding of an outstanding resident for their achievements and contributions has been carried on in North Perth since amalgamation in 1998.

The ***Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award*** is a new award that is part of the Celebrate North Perth initiative. Each Celebrate North Perth Inspiration Award recognizes an individual who inspires others through their outstanding accomplishment or service to the community within the preceding year.

For more information, please contact:

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