



2017 AWARDS PRESENTATION RECEPTION

MARQUEE SPONSOR



BAYVIEW
PLACE



Bayview Place and the E&N Roundhouse site unites a living past with a vibrant future. It is an inspiring 20-acre master planned community integrating a rich history with the best of modern west coast architecture and design.

Patricia and Kenneth W. Mariash Sr. have a vision that is shaping a new community in the neighbourhood of Vic West. Residences Bayview One and Promontory are now joined by the third tower, Encore, with the fourth residence is in the design phase - all connected by pathways and urban parks. The Mariash vision is built on connection – connecting people, connecting histories, and connecting Victorians to a city that is growing, diversifying and facing a fresh and inspiring future.

ABOUT THE VICTORIA LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The Victoria Community Leadership Awards were created to recognize the inspiring stories and successes of community leadership by residents of Greater Victoria. Each year, the Awards seek out nominations of people from all ages and all walks of life who have made a large community impact or demonstrated positive leadership in their community. The contributions of these recipients go beyond one workplace or organization. They build connections and enhance the quality of life of many people throughout Greater Victoria.

The Victoria Leadership Awards were created in 2004 by founding partners: Leadership Victoria, the Harbourside Rotary Club, and the University of Victoria. For more than a decade, our region's business, government and community sectors have been recognizing the contribution of people and organizations who demonstrate commitment, inspiration, encouragement and accomplishment. Our partners now include The Victoria Foundation and the University of Victoria. With the added involvement of nine valued Sponsors, this event has grown to showcase 24 stories of community leadership.

This year our selection committee, drawn from past recipients of the Victoria Leadership Awards, chose 24 stories that represented strong examples of community leadership, geographic representation through the region, and impact on a variety of community issues. These individuals and teams have been nominated by the general public and selected on the basis of the positive impact or change they have created through their leadership.

Each year, every one of our recipients represent exemplary stories of leadership and commitment to their community. The volunteers and organizers of the Victoria Community Leadership Awards are truly grateful to all that our recipients do to make an impact in their community and enhance the lives of others. As you read each story, and observe the Awards presented tonight, we invite you to think about the leaders in your life and consider making a nomination for next year.

Share your experience at the 2017 Victoria Community Leadership Awards

We encourage attendees to share photos of the awards reception! Please use our VCLA hashtag:

#VCLA2017



MESSAGES FROM AWARDS PARTNERS



Leadership Victoria Society

Sarah Hood
Board President, Leadership Victoria



Leadership Victoria embodies the values of collaboration, stewardship and community impact. We work hard to towards our mission of developing, supporting, and celebrating leaders who are passionately engaged in building a vibrant community. Hosting the Victoria Community Leadership Awards is one way we recognize the local leaders that sometimes go unnoticed but are a vital part of our community. Our 24 stories celebrated tonight are not only amazing examples of community leadership, they are stories of the people who have deep roots in our community and have made an unmeasurable impact on many people in Greater Victoria. We are proud to continue to showcase these incredible leaders throughout our region.



University of Victoria

Jennifer Vornbrock
Executive Director, Community and
Government Relations,
University of Victoria



The University of Victoria is proud to support the Victoria Community Leadership Awards and continue our commitment to recognize inspiring examples of community leadership in Greater Victoria.

At UVic, we aspire to promote dynamic learning that that will have a vital impact on issues that matter to people, places, and the planet. Our extraordinary academic environment inspires bold action and new ways of thinking. One of our central goals as a university is to develop leaders with talent, new ideas and solutions to help address the economic, social, cultural, technological and environmental challenges that lie before us.

The Community Leadership Awards recognize the important contribution that community members make to the Greater Victoria region. Indeed, all the leaders honoured through these awards confirm that, together, we are making the world a better place. The University of Victoria congratulates each of you on your outstanding contributions.



VICTORIA
FOUNDATION

CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE

The Victoria Foundation

Patrick Kelly
Chair, The Victoria Foundation



The Victoria Foundation is proud to be a partner in the 2017 Victoria Community Leadership Awards. Our vision is a vibrant, caring community for all, and each year the awards recognize deserving organizations and individuals helping to make that goal a reality. Since 1936, the Victoria Foundation has focused on connecting people who care with causes that matter®. We manage charitable gifts from donors whose generosity allows us to create permanent, income-earning funds. The proceeds from these funds are distributed as grants to causes donors wish to support on southern Vancouver Island and beyond. Our mission is to inspire giving, to thoughtfully care for the assets entrusted to us, and to invest in people, ideas and activities that strengthen our communities – both for today and for generations to come.



EVENT COORDINATION STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Selections Committee

Past recipients of Victoria Leadership Awards who volunteered to adjudicate the selection process.

Ingrid Bergmann
Shawn Steele
Leanna Hill

Volunteers

Thank-you to our volunteers for contributing their time to make this event possible.

Pam Chandra	Catherine Novak
Crystabelle Fobler	Mary-Jane Posno
Caroline Herbert	Amber Woodsworth

Event Coordination Team

This event would not be possible without the hard work of our event coordination team.

Anabelle Bernard Fournier	Freelance Writer – Recipient Stories
Morgan Slavkin	University of Victoria
Jennifer Wong	University of Victoria
Susan Low	Leadership Victoria
Tiffany Robinson	Leadership Victoria

DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES



Astrid Braunschmidt

Astrid Braunschmidt is a familiar face on television here on Vancouver Island and a regular on local radio, too. You'll see her weather forecasts nightly on CTV News Vancouver Island and hear them throughout the day on partner radio station CFX 1070. Astrid began her career as a journalist, winning an Edward R. Murrow Award for hard news reporting, before switching gears and studying meteorology at Mississippi State University. Astrid is a member of the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society (CMOS), and was recently named a CMOS Endorsed Weathercaster for the calibre of her on-air weather presentations. In her off time she volunteers with a variety of charities and non-profits through board work and event emceeing.

EVENT SPONSORS

We are grateful to the organizations who help us to celebrate the inspiring stories and inspiring people demonstrating community leadership in Greater Victoria.

Marquee Sponsor



Award Partners



University
of Victoria



Storyteller Sponsors



Awards Champions



Promoter Sponsors



Making It Happen: In-Kind Contributors



AGENDA

Thursday, March 2nd, 2017

- 5:45 pm Awards Reception Doors Open
- 6:00 pm Announcement and Procession of Official Party:
- The Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia
 - President, Leadership Victoria Society, Sarah Hood
 - Director of Community and Government Relations, University of Victoria, Jennifer Vornbrock
 - Chief Executive Officer, The Victoria Foundation, Sandra Richardson
 - Owner/Founder, Bayview Place, Ken Mariash
- Welcoming Remarks
- The Honourable Judith Guichon
Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia
- Director of Ceremonies: Astrid Braunschmidt, CTV Vancouver Island
- Marquee Sponsor Message: Ken Mariash, Bayview Place
- 6:10 pm Recognition of Victoria Community Leadership Awards Recipients
- 6:25 pm Closing Remarks
- Susan Low, Executive Director of Leadership Victoria Society
- Cocktail reception and food service
- 8:00 pm Event Conclusion

FOOD SECURITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP

Brought to you by Vancity Savings Credit Union

Vancity is a values-based financial co-operative serving the needs of its more than 519,000 member-owners. As Canada's largest community credit union, Vancity uses its \$19.8 billion in assets to help improve the financial well-being of its members while at the same time helping to develop healthy communities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. We invest in communities because our vision to redefine wealth calls on us to measure success in terms of how we contribute to the financial, environmental and social well-being of the communities where our members live and work. We call it Good Money™. And it's transforming the place where we live and work. These inspiring people are doing inspiring work in our community and we are proud to celebrate their success in creating financial, social, and environmental well-being.



Stephanie Ferguson & Teale Phelps Bondaroff: Little Free Libraries Mapping Project

Stephanie Ferguson and Teale Phelps Bondaroff are avid cyclists. During their rides, they kept seeing little free libraries (LFLs) in interesting places all over town. They wondered, "do people know about these?" and decided to take on the task, in collaboration with the Victoria Placemaking Network, of mapping all the LFLs in Greater Victoria.



Using social media to connect with local lawmakers, libraries, schools and community members, they managed to map out the 100+ little free libraries in the GVA, all the way from Metchosin and up to Sidney. "Library boxes are like coral: they let people build communities around them. The box we manage at Rutledge Park enabled us to get out of our house, meet our neighbours, and help create a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood," Ferguson and Phelps explain.

They see the LFLs as part of the growing sharing economy: things like co-housing, community gardens, tool and seed libraries are all linked to each other in building resilient, sustainable, welcoming communities. And when asked, "Aren't you worried people will steal the books?", they respond: "They're free! They can't be stolen! People share willingly, and if a book is needed, then it's okay to take it."



Esquimalt Farmers Market Society

When Katrina Dwulit was told by the town of Esquimalt that she couldn't sell her extra raspberries on the side of the road, she wondered, "how can I find a space to sell my locally-grown berries... and maybe other people's wares too?" Instead of waiting for someone to do something, she took matters into her own hands and organized the first meeting that would lead to Greater Victoria's newest farmer's market, in Esquimalt.



Today, the six members of the board, Katrina Dwulit, Vanessa Pattison, Mirella Marchese-Colagrande, Lise Richard, Michael Dillistone and Emily Cheevers, lead a year-long event with monthly indoor markets in the winter and weekly outdoor markets in the summer. Esquimalt Farmer's Market has become a true community space where families come to meet, shop, eat, and just hang out. It's also been a great support for local business: artisans that began selling their wares at Esquimalt Farmer's Market now have thriving businesses, with Etsy shops and access to the shelves of Victoria's finest stores and boutiques.

The board of Esquimalt Farmer's Market have shown true leadership in increasing access to fresh, local food for Esquimalt residents, as well as supporting local farmers and artisans.

Kim Cummins: Shelbourne Community Kitchen

Kim Cummins cares about good food. And not only does she care about good food, but she cares about access to good food. This is why her work as the program co-ordinator at the Shelbourne Community Kitchen is so important: she helps everyone have access to fresh ingredients and the skills to turn it into delicious and nutritious meals for the whole family.



"Food security is a complex issue," says Cummins, "but we can help with the diversity of programs we offer, with the variety of skills of our volunteers and community members, and a creative, non-judgmental space for everyone to connect with food." The kitchen serves more than 260 participants each month.

Cummins believes that leadership is about listening to the people you work with, and helping them work with the talents and skills that make them thrive. "Since we work exclusively with volunteers, we need to look at everyone's skills and talents, and make them feel part of a community to which they can contribute." She says that leadership means leaving your ego at the door, making space for the team, learning from your mistakes, and celebrating your successes.

Linda Ferguson: The Shoebox Project Victoria

It was on a visit with her daughter in Vancouver that Linda Ferguson discovered the Shoebox Project. After filling and wrapping up a shoebox with items for a woman living in a shelter, she wondered if there was a similar project in Victoria. "I called the organization in Toronto", Ferguson says, "and they asked me if I wanted to lead the project on the Island. I accepted right away."



Every year for Christmas, volunteers for the Shoebox Project fill up shoeboxes with small items and gifts for women in shelters, little luxuries that most of them can't get at this point in their lives. These boxes are distributed to local shelters and transition houses, and then given to the women staying with them. "When I started, I had no idea how this was going to explode," says Ferguson. To grow from a few boxes in the first year, to close to 1000 in 2016, "it takes many volunteers to help and turn the wheel. I don't do this alone: I have a team of dedicated women who give their precious time during the holidays for this project. Leadership changes your community."

Sharmarke Dubow: World Refugee Day Victoria

Sharmarke Dubow represents all the meaningful ways that refugees and immigrants improve our society. When he arrived in 2012 after years of living in refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia and Egypt, Dubow realized that Victoria did not celebrate World Refugee Day. Wasting no time, he began looking for a way to raise awareness about World Refugee Day.



His first success was to collaborate with the Greater Victoria Public Library team to organize three Refugee Day events in 2013, to the surprise of many. Since then, World Refugee Day events have been growing steadily in size, thanks to Dubow's leadership and commitment to this work. He has dedicated his time in Victoria to fostering relationships between community members, elected officials and newcomers, and the success of World Refugee Day events in Victoria are a testament to his leadership.

He is currently involved in several organizations and boards, including the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, the Immigration and Settlement Working Group of the Canadian Council for Refugees, and the Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture to help further the rights and integration of immigrants and refugees.



Don Evans: Our Place Society

In his 5 years as Executive Director of Our Place Society, Don Evans has increased its residence and program capacities, made meaningful connections with community organizations and governments, turned the Society's finances around, and gave it a positive reputation once more. "It's the perfect combination for my passion for social justice, and my finance and business background," Evans says.



Collaborating with the community at large has given Our Place the resources to contribute help and support with ongoing events, such as Tent City and the current drug crisis. In fact, collaboration and teamwork are important values for Evans. "You need to surround yourself with people who share your passions. I believe that the people I have around me are just as strong, or stronger than me." Humility, Evans believes, is one of the most important features of a good leader. "We don't do any of it on our own. We've had people to help us, and we have to recognize the people around me who continue to help me every day."

Evans believes that leadership comes from a spirit of service: service to his team and staff, service to the users of Our Place, and service to the community.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND HEALTHY PLACES

Brought to you by BC Transit

From small towns to large urban centres, BC Transit connects over 50 million customers in communities across the province every year. In the Victoria region, we carried over 25 million customers last year. BC Transit's vision is to connect people and communities to a more sustainable future. Public transit is part of a land use and transportation community plan. In partnership with communities, we promote walking, cycling and using transit. These people are all community leaders doing innovative and inspiring work through collaboration. We are proud to celebrate their success in creating a more sustainable future for our communities.



Melanie Mahlman: Victoria Hospitals Foundation

(Photo Credit: Maryam Morrison Photography)

When Melanie Mahlman took over the leadership of the Victoria Hospitals Foundation, she believed it was an amazing opportunity to take an organization that was not performing at its best, into one that mirrored the high quality of care that Island Health was known for. "I had a clear vision of who we could be and what we could do. I just had to take the proper steps to bring people together, share the vision, and put plans in place to do the best work we could do," says Mahlman.



Since 1993, the Victoria Hospitals Foundation has raised over \$121 million for diagnostic and treatment equipment. In 2013, the VHF was named as a top 10 health care charity in BC, and in 2016 was identified as one of Canada's top 10 corporate cultures. "The great thing about having people around you is that you get to inspire them... and they inspire you in return," Mahlman adds. "I'm surrounded by smart and inspiring people from whom I learn every day." Being in charge of an organization for 23 years also has its benefits: "It's great to be able to pick up the phone and provide consistency for people. It gives me a deep sense of history of the organization."



Susan Simmons: Multiple Sclerosis Awareness

(Photo credit: Seaproof.tv)

When Susan Simmons was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) at age 30, her doctor told her to avoid exercise. She followed this advice, only to be unable to walk even a block without feeling exhausted. So at age 40, she decided that “doing nothing” was not going to work for her, and began a swimming program that would restore her health, her confidence, and her life. “It’s a message of hope: don’t let the disease stop you from living. Anything is possible,” Simmons says.

Each of Simmons’ record-breaking swims (she will swim from Port Angeles to Victoria this summer) is meant not only to push her limits, but also to raise awareness about MS and the needs of people who suffer from it. “I have MS, I am able-bodied, and I have the ability to organize. I feel it’s my duty, as a member of the community, to contribute whatever skills I have to make it healthier.”

To Simmons, anyone who gets up to do something is a leader: “low profile, high profile, it doesn’t matter. Whether it’s the person raising funds, or a neighbour bringing food to an MS patient, we’re all leaders.”



Graham Robertson & Beth Turner: Cycle of Life Tour

(Photo Credit: Val Hilder)

Since 2011, Graham Robertson and Beth Turner have been organizing the Cycle of Life Tour, a bike ride meant to raise awareness about hospice care, and to raise funds for the Victoria Hospice. “I wanted to make a difference and talked with a few friends. One of them mentioned hospice care, and I learned that it was an incredibly important service that wasn’t recognized enough,” says Robertson, who rode 3200 km in a month between Anchorage, Alaska, and Victoria that first year.

“When I started, it was just me and Beth. But over the years, it has grown into something amazing that involves many volunteers and organizations,” Robertson adds. “Because I was the founder, I often get more credit, but Beth is the other half of this project.” The organization of the ride has now passed to Victoria Hospice, but the legacy of Robertson and Turner’s dedication to hospice and palliative care will be felt for years to come. “Being a leader means having the drive to step up and make a change. But no matter how big a leader is, they can’t do it all by themselves.”



Westshore Sooke Parent Education and Support Group

(Photo credit: Richard Robinson)

Never doubt that moms are a powerful force in the world. Faced with a dire need for mental health support for Westshore and Sooke families, four moms got together and decided to step up and organize, for the benefit of all the parents in their community. This is how the group’s monthly mental health workshop series began.

Pam Bell, one of the founding members of the group, says: “taking the initiative was the first step; we had lots of support for the rest.” The workshops, led by mental health experts recruited by the group, have covered topics like depression, eating disorders, self-harm, sleep, anxiety, and family communication.

“I called all of the service providers in the region and asked for help; everyone was willing to step up. Leadership is about building a community around you and working as a team,” says Bell.



Erin Long: The Mistletoe Project

(Photo Credit: kgoodphoto)

For what she calls “drops in the bucket”, the \$65,000 Erin Long and her friends raised over the years of the Mistletoe Project feels rather like a bucketful of positive change. The Mistletoe Project began in Long’s own home, a simple holiday event where friends brought food to share and donations for the Mustard Seed.

In 2008, Donald Peterson convinced her to turn her gathering into an annual gala, which supported a different organization each year, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, MS Society, and Help Fill a Dream Foundation. “It’s been a labour of love and a cool way to get connected to the community, meet great people I wouldn’t have met otherwise, and learn about the different organizations we have here in Victoria,” says Long. “I knew it had an immediate impact, but I didn’t realize how big this impact had become over the years.”

To her, leadership opened many doors that she wouldn’t have walked through otherwise: “People were welcoming, helpful and supportive. All I had to do was to get myself out there, and it opened my mind to the fact that this is a community, and everyone wants to be part of it.”



Gerald Harris: Green Spaces and Ecosystem Restoration

Sometimes life offers you occasions to make a difference even in your retirement. Take Gerald Harris, for example. His 40-year career included fisheries and environmental work with teaching for the visually impaired and deafblind. He has always paid particular attention to salmon streams and was particularly interested in the Bowker Creek watershed, and in retirement he has deepened this interest. He now makes a difference as a community leader in a number of habitat restoration and public greenspace projects throughout the Victoria region.

Gerald Harris has led several natural area restoration and greenspace improvement projects in the Bowker Creek watershed. His favourite projects bring neighbours together to remove invasive plants and replace them with hardy, drought-tolerant native plants that require little maintenance when established. He is a frequent host of the Bowker Creek Initiative outreach information tent at public events since 2006. Gerald also practices the art of storytelling to bring knowledge of local histories and public awareness for Bowker Creek urban watershed renewal.

He was partly influenced to start working green spaces in North Jubilee by his enjoyment of an ecology group from his church, creating a native plant garden on church property.

"I found that leadership, at least how it applies to me, doesn't have to be very much, because it seems like this stuff wants to happen and people want to get involved," says Harris. His projects work with the help of many volunteer gardeners, most of them retired, who built a "kind of good collegial working community that you lose when you leave work."



SUSTAINABILITY, COMMUNITY BUILDING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Brought to you by Royal Roads University

Since inception, Royal Roads University has developed a legacy of excellence in leadership and learning, challenging our students to apply what they learn to lead and make positive change in themselves, their work and their communities. At Royal Roads our interdisciplinary approach to research, teaching and learning exposes our students to the best ideas from multiple and diverse perspectives and encourages them to develop unique solutions to our world's most complex problems. As tonight's inspiring recipients illustrate, a diversity of perspectives, experiences and skills build and strengthen a healthy society. Royal Roads recognizes the positive impact these community leaders and groups have made and we are honoured to celebrate their contributions.



Laurel Collins: Divest Victoria

Unless we're involved (or interested) in municipal finances, we know very little about where our local funds are invested. But Laurel Collins knows that some of it is in funds that support the fossil fuel industry---and she wants to change that. "I went to a city council meeting about the budget, brought up divestment, and I had councillors contact me who were interested in organizing to form Divest Victoria," says Collins. The group has since involved other towns in BC, and the Union of BC Municipalities, into putting pressure on the Municipal Financial Authority to provide fossil-free investment funds for municipalities.

"Divest Victoria has been a truly collaborative effort," Collins adds. "We have organized our group in a way that challenges the normal hierarchies of organizations. We are collaborative and inclusive in our decision-making, helping people define leadership in ways that work for them." To Collins, the success of tomorrow's social justice movements depends on people coming together in collaborative networks where everyone is empowered to take responsibility for change. "A lot of people who are doing the organizing, making meals, and driving equipment around, aren't those we normally see as leaders, but they're often the ones doing the most transformative work."



Paul Latour: HeroWork Society

(Photo Credit: Lenore Barron Photography)

Paul Latour calls his HeroWork project “the art of modern barn-raising”. The idea is simple: bringing together a few hundred volunteers and a few dozen companies to renovate the building of a not-for-profit organization. It’s not so much work as a big construction party: local hotels and restaurants cater the meals, and there’s live entertainment while people are eating. The big reveal is an event in itself, with screens installed outside so people gathered on the street can see the look on the recipients’ faces when they go in for the first time.

“This project started as a bit of a fluke,” says Latour. “A friend of mine with MS needed people to care for her garden, so instead of spending a few hours there every weekend, I brought in a small team to do a garden makeover.” Infrastructure is a costly item for most not-for-profit organizations, and there is little support for keeping buildings well maintained. This is the reason why Latour focuses on renovation work. He adds: “Leadership is living courageously, stepping out, and loving openly. Just being at the right place at the right time is enough to make a change in the world!”

Greater Victoria Community Literacy Initiative

In 2015, various literacy groups in Victoria, including the Greater Victoria Public Library, Literacy Victoria, Victoria READ Society, Victoria Literacy Task Group, The Learning Curve, UVic, and Victoria Immigrant & Refugee Centre Society came together to discuss Greater Victoria’s literacy challenges. At the end of this discussion, the organising team members--Barry Gray, Keith Jones, Jennifer Rowan and Carol Carman--put together the Greater Victoria Literacy initiative, a long-term project “that brings people together for a more integrated literacy strategy in the region.”

“We used the Challenge Dialogue Process, a technique meant to help disparate groups find a common goal,” says Jennifer Rowan. This approach allowed these organizations to draw up the complex roadmap of literacy challenges in the region. Although the full effects of the Initiative are still to be seen, bringing together these organizations under the leadership of the organising team members has already forged new relationships, raised awareness, and contributed to the development of an integrated literacy strategy for the benefit of all Greater Victoria.



Frances Litman: Creatively United for the Planet

(Photo Credit: Daniel Gelinias)

Frances Litman is a household name in Victoria. From reporter at the Times Colonist to political candidate in the last federal election, Litman has been involved in the region’s community life for a long time. “I think people are becoming more aware of what’s going on in the world,” she says. “I want to bring people together to showcase local people, businesses and organizations that make our community a better place.” Her flagship project is called Creatively United for the Planet. Although it began as an annual Earth Day festival, Creatively United is now active year-long, raising awareness about environmental and social justice issues from the grassroots.

To Litman, leadership is “the inspired actions that people take every day to improve their communities for the benefit of everyone.” She finds solidarity in strength, conviction, and shared vision: “There are more of us than there are of them, and we do have a lot of power. If you have a good idea that can help everyone, I want to see it move forward.” Litman’s latest initiative, thisisleadership.org, is meant to encourage people to come forward with their ideas and projects, and to connect people with those who can help them realize their vision.

Shellie Gudgeon: Community Building

(Photo credit: Ben Kwok - Japan Camera foto source)

Shellie Gudgeon credits her experience in the hospitality industry for her ability to bring people together and find common ground. “The neighbourhood is where we start building community,” she says. “I helped facilitate the creation of Begbie Park, but it was the neighbourhood who made it happen.” To Gudgeon, the leadership part is only what gets things going; the real difference-makers are the communities and neighbourhoods who come together for a cause.

“At the heart of leadership, seek to understand,” Gudgeon adds. “If we’re going to succeed, we need to lead from the heart and be authentic. We need to move away from the need to be right, and move towards the ability to listen and understand everyone’s point of view.” She believes that the most effective decision-making happens when people truly listen to what everyone has to say, and find balance. “Meaningful community building is messy. It takes patience, time, and understanding. But it’s also lasting.”



Leslie Campbell and David Broadland: Focus Magazine

30 years ago, Leslie Campbell and David Broadland created Focus on Women as a space where local women could tell their stories and empower themselves and the community. In 2004, the magazine became Focus, and began telling other stories too: local politics, the environment, and the arts. In fact, one third of the magazine's content is dedicated to the arts world:

"We believe that a healthy community depends on a strong art community," says Campbell. "We also focus on specific issues, like regional growth and environmental issues."

Focus has always differentiated itself by its long-form investigative journalism. "If you want to understand a complex issue, like economical growth or the sewage treatment debate, you need long, complex stories that not only put the facts in context, but also give you avenues for change. The world is more complicated than what short, snappy pieces can deliver." To Campbell and Broadland, journalists and writers have a leadership role to play in providing information to support well-informed and involved citizens, and ultimately democracy itself. "It takes a lot of digging to get at larger problems and the actual facts of a situation," says Campbell. "The truth can't always come out in a short tweet."



QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Brought to you by Coast Capital Savings

Coast Capital Savings is Canada's largest credit union by membership. An Imagine Canada Caring Company, the credit union invested \$5.6 million into local communities in 2016, focusing on empowering and engaging youth. Coast Capital is one of Canada's 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures™, and a member of Canada's Best Managed Companies Platinum Club. It has 52 branches serving its 532,000 members in the Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and Okanagan regions of British Columbia. Product innovations include Canada's first free chequing account from a full-service financial institution. To learn more, visit coastcapitalsavings.com.



Rebecca Kirstein: Summit at the Pier

When Rebecca Kirstein saw renowned educator Sir Ken Robinson eight years ago at a conference in New York, "it changed how I thought about education, made me realize what didn't work in my own, and made me reflect on how we could make it better for today's youth." A few years later, after having mentored a few youth in business and leadership enterprises, she figured she could bring his message to Victoria by organizing Summit at the Pier, an event meant to spur creative thinking, leadership and collaboration in high school-aged youth, and a "catalyst for stronger communities."

"Leadership is about being the spark," Kirstein says. "I think it's about inspiring people to take action on what drives them, collaboration, connecting the dots, and getting people to work together to achieve more than they could on their own." She believes that inspiring youth to take ownership of their role in our communities and to lead their own initiatives is the surest way to make the world a better place for everyone. "When kids are inspired to lead, when we give them the tools, it allows them to find what drives them and to embrace their spark."



Greater Victoria Public Library: Books for Babies Team

Since 2009, Tracy Kendrick and the Books for Babies team at the Greater Victoria Public Library have distributed thousands of bags to new parents, filled with books, music, and everything they need to know to give their kids a good start in literacy.

"Parents should be reading and singing to children right from birth. Some aren't familiar with that concept, so this is a friendly and fun reminder for them," says Kendrick. With the help of Island Health and neighbourhood outreach, the program gives out about 2000 bags a year. "We try to choose books and music from BC-based authors and artists as much as we can," Kendrick adds. "This gives new parents a great connection BC and Canada's best artists."

To Kendrick, leadership is all about empowerment: "I think that as a leader, my goal is to create opportunities for people to bring their gifts to the community. I set up the framework and organization so our staff is in a position to bring their best. They come up with such creative solutions to challenges and problems!" Partnerships with several organizations that support reading, parents and libraries make this project possible: "We cannot do it alone!"



Renee Sala: Bringing Art to Schools

As a teenager, Renee Sala already knew she loved working with kids. She would babysit for her neighbours and get the kids working on all kinds of art projects during their time together. "I love the energy of children," she says. "They're so open and willing to try new things." After she graduated from Camosun, Sala began applying for grants and working with local schools on large-scale projects that would involve everyone: kids, staff, teachers and parents. Out of this came massive installations that can be seen at Tillicum Elementary, Ecole Margaret Jenkins, Torquay Elementary, Colwood Elementary, and Macaulay Elementary, among others.

"In my projects, I get to talk to kids about topics like the environment, for example. I get to talk to them about real issues, and show them how to express their ideas about that topic visually," says Sala. "I try to get everyone to come together and collaborate. Art is a way to unify people, and it's very powerful." To Sala, leadership is all about making people work together towards a common goal: "Someone needs to come forward to bring people together to make an impact. Once you get people motivated, they love to work together." Her focus on community art fosters connections between people and the places they live.



Westshore Sooke Youth Health Advisory Committee

After a survey of high school students in the Westshore-Sooke District revealed that 40% of them didn't have a primary care doctor, Jen Harrison was given the responsibility to plan and open a health clinic in each of the three high schools. She connected with six youth leaders--Kiera, Christina, Markus, Emily, Taylor and Lajah--over the summer to guide and inform the services that would be offered at each clinic. Now, each school has its own Youth Health Advisory Committee, led by youth and mentored by an adult, that is involved in the running and marketing of their school's clinic. Harrison says: "They were there in the beginning, the first ones to step up. We met over the summer to plan for the clinic openings, and their success sits on those six who stuck it out."

Harrison is the Youth and Family Engagement Coordinator who has worked with all six, and she only has positive things to say about these emerging leaders: "They are a wonderful reminder that the youth are not the future: the youth are now. It's important to foster their leadership skills now, and to give them what they're asking for." Now this group of six is taking the initiative on all kinds of health and social justice projects in their own schools, "turning their passion into action."



Troy Wilson: No Child Left Uncut

"It's a wonder what a haircut can do for a child's self-esteem," Troy Wilson explains as he describes the reason for starting his non-profit No Child Left Uncut. Through his business, Status Barber Shop, Wilson provides free or discounted haircuts for any child who needs it. Clients can contribute as well by donating to a pooling fund for these haircuts, or by donating clothing and school supplies that are distributed to local families. "As a business owner, I have a responsibility not only towards my employees and my clients, but also towards the community at large." He also contributes to local cancer fundraising drives by providing haircuts, supplies and tools for those who want to cut or shave their hair for cancer.

Even though he's been an educational assistant with the Victoria School District and regularly works with Victoria Boys and Girls, Wilson says the barber chair is still where he does his most important work: that of counselling, supporting, and lifting local youth's self-esteem. "I want to be the kind of role model I had as a youth that kept me on the right path. Especially as a person of color in Victoria, it's important to be a good example to the community."



Kelly Tilsey: Victoria Walk So Kids Can Talk

Kelly Tilsley is an alumni of the Leadership Victoria program, and currently Chair of Victoria's "Walk So Kids Can Talk", a benefit for Kid's Help Phone. "I volunteered in 2008 and 2009, and then I was asked to help again in 2011 when the Chair fell ill. Then in 2012, I was offered the Chair position," says Tilsley. When he took it over, the event was on the verge of being cancelled because of lack of participation; last year, it raised \$21,000 with the help of hundreds of participants and sponsors. Tilsley and his team of volunteers also raise awareness about Kid's Help Phone at several events during the year, including Teen Fest, Fern Fest and Food Truck Fridays.

"I think leadership is showing people the way, and guiding them," says Tilsley. "Everyone is different, so you have to work with every individual to unlock their full potential." He mentions the Leadership Victoria course as the place where he learned the different leadership techniques he uses every day in his work. "I think being compassionate matters in leadership," he adds. "Sometimes you need to care for people. I've never asked people to do something I haven't done or wouldn't do myself."



BUILDING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN GREATER VICTORIA

The Victoria Leadership Awards are hosted by Leadership Victoria Society, with financial and operational support from the Award Partners and Sponsors.

Susan Low
Executive Director, Leadership Victoria Society



The inspiring stories that we celebrate tonight are outstanding examples of the amazing work of citizens throughout our region which make Greater Victoria a healthy, vibrant community. By coming together to honour these leaders, we show our appreciation and encouragement of their courage, effort, and dedication.

Since 2001, Leadership Victoria has been delivering programs and events that seek to elevate and enhance the capacity of citizens to take on community leadership roles. Through workshops, events like tonight's, and our nine-month Community Leadership Development Program, we strive to inspire and support people from all walks of life to take up the call of leadership – because everybody can make a difference!

Participants of our Community Leadership Development Program are active in all sectors of our economy and community life. The legacy of this program is found in the 60+ Community Action Projects which have been completed. These include physical projects like gardens, benches, and teaching shelters; as well as game-changing awareness campaigns, partnerships, and programming. Graduates of the program take their new leadership skills and confidence forward and become leaders in the workplace and community organizations, sitting on boards and forging new collaborations. Some participants call their Leadership Victoria experience "life-changing" while others credit it for preparing them to take on greater career responsibilities.

Your attendance and participation at tonight's Victoria Community Leadership Awards help to support this programming, at the same time as giving our community's thanks and appreciations to the 46 individuals who have made these 24 stories of leadership come to life.



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