



MUNICIPALITY OF

North Perth

330 WALLACE AVENUE NORTH
LISTOWEL, ON N4W 1L3
519-291-2950 www.northperth.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

Citizen of the Year and Celebrate North Perth Award Recipients

North Perth, May 1, 2025 – The Council of the Municipality of North Perth was excited to celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Night on Wednesday, April 30, 2025. 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 are valued and appreciated by all who call North Perth home.

Please join us in congratulating and recognizing the recipients of the 2024 Celebrate North Perth Awards:

Lucille Wittnebel: 2024 Norm Stirling Citizen of the Year Award Recipient

Born on November 25, 1931, Lucille Wittnebel's life is a testament to resilience, kindness, and unwavering dedication. Through both hardship and joy, Lucille has remained a steady, compassionate presence in her family and community.

Raising three children as a single mother, Lucille faced challenges with courage and determination. She endured the heartbreaking loss of her son, Norman, yet continued to pour love into her family. She later found love again with Bruce Wittnebel, her husband and partner, with whom she shared many happy years until his passing. Together, they embraced life in Kitchener and later in Listowel, enjoying retirement and creating lasting memories. Lucille has had the joy of watching her family grow, surrounded by grandchildren and great-grandchildren who continue to bring light into her life. And of course, her beloved cats have always had a special place in her heart.

Lucille's work ethic was evident from her early career. She began at a department store in downtown Kitchener, where she thrived behind the makeup counter and earned a promotion thanks to her dedication. Seeking fair wages and opportunity, she moved on to J.M. Schneider's, one of the few workplaces at the time offering equal pay for women. Over 25 years on the line, she built a reputation for hard work and perseverance. It was there she met Bruce, and they were married in the mid-1970's.



Even after retirement, Lucille remained active, working as a school crossing guard for a year – rain, shine or snow – for a modest \$100 a week. In the 1990's, Lucille and Bruce moved to Listowel to enjoy their golden years and quickly became active in their new community.

Lucille began volunteering at Listowel Memorial Hospital more than 30 years ago. From the Gift Shop to the patient floors, ER, Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, and Diagnostic Imaging, she has given her time, heart and energy without hesitation. In 1997, she became a driving force behind the hospital's Breast Assessment Center, where she continues to serve to this day.

Through decades of changes in medical technology and processes, Lucille has remained the constant face of comfort and support for the Ontario Breast Screening mammography program. From the days of film in the darkroom to today's digital world, she's been a quiet hero – preparing cassettes, assisting technologists, greeting patients, and ensuring every woman who walks through the door feels welcome and cared for.

Outside of the hospital, Lucille is full of life. A lover of murder mysteries and the occasional trashy magazine, she's also known for her sharp wit and warm spirit. She and Bruce shared a love for golf and travel, and Lucille continues to enjoy social gatherings – from Christmas parties to TikTok dances – with her girls in Diagnostic Imaging. She is also a dedicated member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Listowel.

Lucille Wittnebel's life is one defined by service, strength, and compassion. She continues to touch lives with her warmth, commitment, and humour – an inspiration to all who know her.

Joan MacDonald: 2024 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipient

Joan has been a dedicated volunteer with VON Perth-Huron since 2012 holding several roles including delivering meals monthly through the Meals on Wheels Program, supporting both the team and clients at the Adult Day Program, and assisting in the office by making reminder and check-in calls to clients of the Cool-Aid Program.

Over 58 years ago, Joan became a resident of North Perth. Along with her husband Bob, they nurtured their two children Crystal and Terry – affectionately known as Toad and Mouse – in Donegal. They proudly cherish five grandchildren and one great-grandson.

After her career in the insurance sector in Waterloo, she moved to Atwood where she committed 35 years to Campbell Soup. Believing in the importance of giving back to the community, she engaged with the Atwood Lioness group, helped lead several 4-H clubs, and enjoyed playing ball with the Atwood Mamas. Upon her retirement, she volunteered with a reading program at Elma Public School and continued her efforts in Listowel and Central Public School.

Joan truly embodies community spirit, inspiring others with her exceptional dedications. Her long-standing commitment and diverse roles have motivated her daughter-in-law and even her young great-grandson to volunteer, who has accompanied her in her volunteering efforts and longs to become a VON volunteer when he grows older.

Tyler Martin: 2024 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipient

Born and raised on a dairy farm in Listowel, Tyler experience volunteerism from an early age. His father volunteered with the Listowel Agricultural Hall and his mother with the Diabetes Association. Following closely in his parents' footsteps, Tyler has also spent time canvassing the neighbourhood for the Diabetes Association. As a resident of Atwood since 2008, Tyler has been a member of the Atwood Lions for 15 years, undertaking roles such as president, bulletin editor, Chair of the Pathway through the Park Committee and participating in various other committees including the Outdoor Rink Committee, Light the Park, Parade Float and Witches Walk. His community involvement also embraces Atwood United Church where he serves as board chair and Stewardship chair.

Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of six, Tyler has managed the challenges of this disease throughout his life, never allowing it to impede his success. Tyler is a Certified Engineering Technologist and Drafting Manager at Benshaw in Listowel where he has been employed since 2006. He and his wife Janine have been happily married for nearly 17 years and have two children, Lily and Liam.

Tyler steadfastly believes that a strong community creates strong people, which, in turn create even stronger communities

Christin Dennis: 2024 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipient

Christin Dennis has been a resident of Listowel since 2006, along with his wife Helen and their two sons, Seth and Sam. Christin is Indigenous, from Aamjiwnaang First Nation in Sarnia, and is a Sixties Scoop Survivor. He was removed from his home community at the age of six as part of the Sixties Scoop and was adopted by a non-Indigenous family. As a result of losing access to his language and culture at a young age, it has been Christin's mission to reconnect with his traditions.

Christin has become a knowledge carrier and works actively in North Perth and throughout Perth County to share what he has learned. Christin was inspired to construct a Tipi in North Perth, to offer services to people from both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities. One of the primary purposes of the Tipi is to provide a sacred space for survivors of the Sixties Scoop, their families, and descendants to gather, learn, and rediscover their Indigenous roots, and to heal from their own experiences with colonial systems. Christin's dream came to fruition in April 2024 when the Tipi was constructed on property near Gowanstown with a goal of fostering Truth and Reconciliation in North Perth and the surrounding area. In addition to being sacred space for Sixties Scoop survivors, the Tipi also serves as a community resource to be used for education and is being used by local schools and the Huron Perth Children's Aid Society.

As a spiritual healer and artist, Christin emphasizes the importance of traditional teachings and spiritual growth. As such, he has facilitated sweat lodges for 22 years, advocating self-awareness and cultural coexistence. Now, the Tipi site hosts a sweat lodge where sacred

ceremonies are held. By understanding and embracing the teachings of the ancestral past, Christin seeks to preserve a way of life, share its core values, and help build a vision for our future.

Warren Wray: 2024 Celebrate North Perth – Inspiration Award Recipient

Warren Wray is a shining example of a life well-lived and generously shared. With a rich tapestry of experiences across multiple careers, Warren found his true calling in his 40s as a caring and engaged educator. For two decades, he has poured his heart into teaching—primarily in kindergarten at Eastdale Public School—where his students felt deeply supported, and families felt genuinely included through the many thoughtful and creative activities he organized. Beyond the classroom, Warren is a devoted friend and a pillar in the community, often seen on the sidelines cheering on youth at local sports events or performances, making those in his life feel valued. As a dedicated member of Atwood United Church, he serves as treasurer and frequently helps lead hymns, embodying the spirit of service in both quiet and visible ways. Warren also brings joy and talent to the stage as a regular performer with the Grey Wellington Theatre Guild, enriching the local arts scene with his presence.

Yet perhaps one of his most inspiring contributions is the creation of chess clubs at three North Perth schools. With vision and determination, Warren introduced the game to students from Grades 2 to 8, teaching them not only how to play but how to think critically, compete respectfully, and build confidence. His patient, encouraging, and thoughtful approach ensures that every student, from beginners to experienced players, feels supported and valued. His leadership has brought students to tournaments and events, opening doors to new opportunities and friendships.

Warren’s unwavering commitment to education, community, and passion for empowering the next generation is an inspiration to us all, and his impact will be felt for years to come.

Kailey Brock: 2024 Celebrate North Perth - Youth Impact Award Recipient

Kailey Brock is an eighth-grade student at Westfield Elementary School. She tutors several young individuals in reading and writing and is a beloved babysitter. A very kind-hearted young lady, at 13 years old she is not only helpful around home but has proven her love of volunteering out in the community. Kailey possesses a very sunny disposition and has been an active member of Kin Cares for 3 years. She regularly volunteers at events such as the Teddy Bear Play Day, BBQ fundraisers for Kids Help Phone, hockey tournaments, and distributing candy during parades. During the holiday season, she can be found helping with the Salvation Army Christmas Kettle, singing at the hospital and handing out candy canes.

Last June, Kailey was published in the Listowel Banner for her article titled *“Think you know all about someone? Think again!”* which aims to bring awareness about ABATE, the Association of Bikers for Awareness Training and Education, a charitable organization that focuses on societal contributions. Her connection through her father’s membership of ABATE Chapter 14

Huron Perth inspired her to address the stereotypes often associated with motorcycle clubs and bikers.

Kailey's message resonates with people of all ages: "I hope you will be part of a society that supports those who care, rather than judge them."

Background on the Awards

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 for over 50 years.

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 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.

The **Youth Impact Award** is a new award that is designed to recognize and celebrate the remarkable contributions of our young citizens. It aims to spotlight youth who have shown exemplary leadership, innovation or commitment to community services.

For more information, please contact:

Kriss Snell, Chief Administrative Officer

Municipality of North Perth

519-292-2040

ksnell@northperth.ca

