



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Celebrating Volunteer Award Recipients. Making An Impact Through Empathy In Action.**

Guelph, Ontario | May 3, 2022 |

On Friday, April 29, PIN – The People and Information Network held its annual ‘Time to Give’ in celebration of National Volunteer Week and the contributions of volunteers. With appreciation remarks from all levels of Government, gratitude from presenting sponsor University of Guelph and speaker Dr. Megan Conway, CEO, Volunteer Canada, recognition of the contributions of volunteers was clear.

“Volunteerism fuels communities” says Kim Cusimano, executive director, “recognizing the impact values the efforts of volunteers. 12.7 million Canadians volunteer formally with a group or organization sharing 1.6 billion hours that fuel and flow in our communities; your child’s sport coach, your youth’s mentor, meals delivered to your grandfather, drives for your mom’s cancer treatment; volunteers provide leadership through board service, they fundraise, plan and deliver events, programs and services that we interact with and support our community’s most vulnerable. Local nonprofits and charities leading missions powered by volunteers.”

PIN was pleased to recognize volunteers in 5 award categories through a unique, local initiative supported by the Here to Help team that welcomed artists and photographers to submit art that ‘embodies community’. The winning submission ‘The Bridge that Connects Us’ by Christopher Cape was developed into the 2022 Volunteer Awards. “Art brings people together, provides opportunity for conversations, creates a sense of belonging, brings joy and reflects the values of the community. Volunteerism does this as well.” says Cusimano.

### **2022 Volunteer Award Winners:**

Leaders of Tomorrow - Shuk Man Ng, Student Volunteer Connections, University of Guelph  
Community Volunteer Award - Henry Kielar, Children’s Foundation of Guelph and Wellington  
Guiding Light Award – Kate Webster, Up and Running Guelph  
Leadership Award – Michael Ruhl, Compass Community Services  
Lifetime Achievement Award – Louise Mackenzie and JoAnne Howes, East Wellington Community Services

In addition, with thanks to Sleeman Breweries, award winners were captured in a [PIN volunteer appreciation video](#) that highlighted their volunteer efforts in support of local organizations and provided insight for viewers about what volunteering means to them.

“PIN believes in the value of contributing to community formally and informally” says Cusimano, “In addition to formal volunteering, 74% of Canadians volunteer informally giving back 3.4 billion hours through various acts of kindness; lending a green thumb to a neighbour starting a garden, child minding for a friend, collecting food or hosting a birthday food drive, the generosity of the human spirit can be found through even the simplest of acts.”

The theme of National Volunteer Week 2022 was 'Volunteering is Empathy in Action' affirming the strong connection between volunteerism and empathy. "We have seen this caring and human kindness in action; the generosity of spirit is a shining light even in our recent dark times. Volunteerism is a connector, a powerhouse, a community asset." says Cusimano

Canadians are invited to help build a roadmap to 'Empathy in Action'. During National Volunteer Week, Volunteer Canada, in partnership with the Rideau Hall Foundation and Employment and Social Development Canada, launched a national conversation about empathy. Specifically, how to turn empathy into action. That conversation will contribute towards building a roadmap to empathy in action, and ultimately a national voluntary action strategy. [empathyinaction.ca](http://empathyinaction.ca)

As National Volunteer Week ends and Mental Health Week begins, empathy is a common thread. In the recent survey conducted by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and UBC researchers found that '[only 13% of Canadians are feeling empathetic](#)', a 10% decline since the onset of the pandemic. Empathy is the ability to understand another's perspective and feelings and volunteering can help us develop empathy, to see the world through the eyes of others, connect and strengthen our relationships and expand our view through diverse, lived experiences.

"Acts of kindness, giving, volunteering" says Cusimano, "however personally defined, the generosity of spirit has impact. Across the country, right here at home and within ourselves. Together we can uplift our hearts, community and our sense of belonging through empathy in action."

Learn more about the award winners and view the video at [PINnetwork.ca](http://PINnetwork.ca)

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**PIN, The People and Information Network**

We provide connections and leadership in Guelph and Wellington County to support the development of individuals and organizations. We provide a hub for volunteer opportunities and engagement and enable best practices and continuous learning for professionals in the non-profit sector. **[PINnetwork.ca](http://PINnetwork.ca)**

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