



# Press Release

## **PORT COQUITLAM RECOGNIZES ITS “AMAZING” VOLUNTEERS**

**Port Coquitlam, BC - April 22, 2009 . . .** About 250 people came together at Riverside Secondary Tuesday night to marvel at contortionists, be awed by a mentalist and be enchanted by jazz musicians, as the community honoured local volunteers at the City of Port Coquitlam’s 2009 Volunteer Recognition Awards and Tribute.

And by the end of the evening, six more names had been selected for the honour roll of Port Coquitlam Volunteer Recognition Award recipients.

This year’s event was designed around the theme Port Coquitlam Volunteers are Amazing, reflected in the remarkable talent of local vocalist Myles McCarthy, the West Coast Contortionists, the Riverside Secondary Jazz Ensemble and mentalist Gerry Hennessey. It was co-sponsored by Terasen Gas for the 11<sup>th</sup> year.

Mayor Greg Moore served as the event’s emcee. “It is my pleasure this year to stand up here and share with you all how fortunate as a community we are to benefit from the personal hard work and contributions our volunteers make,” he told the audience. “We should never let their efforts be taken for granted, expected, or forgotten.”

The event also included a champagne and cocktail reception and door prizes, as well as appetizers and sweets prepared by the Riverside Culinary Arts Program. Students involved in Riverside’s Green Shirts leadership/volunteer group were on hand as well to assist with logistics and service support.

A total of 24 nominations were received for 19 nominees for the six Volunteer Recognition Award categories.

“You have all been witness to the personal strength, desire and energy our volunteers possess, and know these are well earned and deserved nominations,” Mayor Moore said.

Awards were presented in the following categories:

**ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL AWARENESS** – Preserves and celebrates Port Coquitlam’s past and shares our community heritage with others; promotes the arts and cultural development of our community.

*2009 Nominees* – Ken Coupe and Bryan Ness

*2009 Award Recipient* – Bryan Ness

Bryan Ness has become increasingly involved in the community since moving to Port Coquitlam with his family in 2000. Since 2006, he has dedicated countless hours to sharing Port Coquitlam’s history through the Port Coquitlam Heritage and Cultural Society, as a director, member and tireless volunteer. His efforts include documenting events and interviews, presenting heritage documentaries, and leading heritage walks and school tours. He is also active at Cedar Drive elementary, and in the past, spearheaded projects for the Burnaby Village Museum.

Ness received multiple nominations; one nominator wrote: “He has created awareness in the community about heritage, and the passion he displays and the amount of energy and time he gives is commendable.”

**CARING AND SAFETY** – Enhances and promotes the community through caring actions and outstanding acts of humanitarianism; contributes towards making Port Coquitlam a safer place for residents of all ages.

*2009 Nominees* – Dave and Pat Davies, Joan Gould, Luvdeep Malhi, Dave Teixeira, Linda Thiessen, Lena Turner and Michael Woytas

*2009 Award Recipient* – Dave Teixeira

Dave Teixeira, organizer of the Terry Fox Hometown Run since 2004, gives selflessly of his time and energy to make each year’s event a success. Leading by example, he willingly takes on challenges and seeks new ways to help. For example, in addition to his role as run organizer, he has taken on and developed the Great Canadian Head Shave, another fundraiser for the Terry Fox Foundation. His commitment to making Port Coquitlam a better place has also led him to serve on or support the Tri-Cities Crystal Meth Committee, the Tri-Cities Homelessness Committee, Youth Matters!, Port Coquitlam Spirit of BC Committee, Live @ Leigh Square, Pink Shirt Anti-Bully Day, the Mayor’s Action Team on Homelessness, Wrestling with Hunger and other causes.

“These are the efforts of a dedicated and passionate man who is not afraid to work hard in his community so that each citizen can feel safe and that each of us can feel pride in the community we call home,” one of Teixeira’s nominators said.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT** – Demonstrates an outstanding commitment to the promotion and preservation of Port Coquitlam’s natural environment for present and future generations.

*2009 Nominees* – Harry Burgoyne, Linda Saunders and Marianne Wotherspoon

*2009 Award Recipient* – Harry Burgoyne

Harry Burgoyne has volunteered with Hyde Creek Watershed Society since before its inception. He does everything and anything, including overseeing egg incubation, maintenance, monitoring stream flows and quality, sourcing and donating tools, and painting more than 1,000 yellow fish near storm drains. He keeps himself informed on local issues and has a special

interest in passing on his knowledge and passion to children through the hatchery education program. He is also a member of the Steelhead Society of B.C.

Burgoyne is described by his nominators as selfless and caring. As one wrote, "Harry is kind, inclusive, generous and helpful. He is a wonderful asset to the community and a great ambassador for the City. He is a friend to other stewards... Harry loves to volunteer; he is a volunteer's volunteer."

**SPORTS AND RECREATION** – Enhances the quality of physical activity in Port Coquitlam; contributes to the management and/or operations of a sports or recreation activity; demonstrates outstanding dedication to Port Coquitlam's sports and recreation community.

*2009 Nominees* – Rick and Cheryl Bridges, Julie Fitzgerald and Michelle MacRae

*2009 Award Recipient* – Michelle MacRae

Born and raised in Port Coquitlam, Michelle MacRae (nee Baillie) started playing ringette in 1978 and has been a volunteer coach for Port Coquitlam Ringette Association (now Ridge Meadows Ringette Association) for 25 years. Despite working full time, raising a family and other volunteer work, MacRae dedicates countless hours to coaching, refereeing and supporting the players and the sport. She also volunteers with the Lower Mainland Ringette League and with Special Olympics Floor Hockey as a tournament referee.

"Michelle is by far the most energetic coach I have ever met," one of her nominators wrote. "She loves the game, and as a result, the players on her team love the game... Her dedication to the sport and children that play for her is second to none."

**YOUTH PROGRAMS** – An individual who supports Port Coquitlam's youth through the development, provision and/or participation in youth programs and activities (excluding amateur athletics).

*2009 Nominees* – Cheryl Lebrun and Debby Murillo

*2009 Award Recipient* – Debby Murillo

Debby Murillo is the energetic founder of Creating Tomorrows, a soon-to-be non-profit organization that organizes Challenge Day for youths. Debby works tirelessly to fundraise and organize Challenge Day, which is about empowering and inspiring youth, providing them with life-changing experiences and allowing them to be themselves. She also ensures there is follow-up support to youth who have a need. Murillo leads monthly "Circle of Change" meetings where youths and adults come together to talk and support each other. She has also been a foster mother to many youth at risk.

"Debby has pioneered bringing Challenge Day to our community, and with her, she has brought friends, colleagues and community members to help her reach her dream of creating an environment where all youth feel loved and celebrated," her nominator wrote. "She is dedicated to life-long learning and empowering of others."

**U21 (YOUTH UNDER 21)** – Reserved for the recognition of a Port Coquitlam youth, under the age of 21, who has demonstrated a commitment to our community and has made extraordinary volunteer contributions in any of the categories above.

*2009 Nominees – Vicky Chan and Britnee Roberts*

*2009 Award Recipient – Vicky Chan*

A Grade 12 student at Archbishop Carney Secondary, Vicky Chan already has a list of volunteer credits longer than most adults. Her efforts are many and varied. She has initiated a youth march for affordable housing and a fair trade awareness dinner; volunteered in an after-school program in the Bronx during a school trip to New York; volunteers bi-monthly at a Downtown Eastside soup kitchen and bi-weekly in Port Coquitlam serving food to the homeless; has volunteered numerous times as a harpist for orchestras and events; has represented her school and B.C. at conferences across Canada; and volunteers at SFU campus radio.

Her nominator wrote that Chan is “a bright, academically strong student who possesses a strong social conscience and desire to act to raise awareness and educate others about important issues facing her and the world. She is also active in making regular and tangible contributions to develop, promote and improve her community and the lives of its citizens through her volunteer efforts at school, in the community, across Canada and internationally.”

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Port Coquitlam’s Volunteer Recognition Awards were created in 1997 to recognize the community’s outstanding volunteers.

All 19 award nominees for 2009 were invited to attend the Volunteer Recognition Awards and Tribute, and the six volunteers selected for Volunteer Recognition Awards received a personalized award. All awards nominees and volunteers attending the Volunteer Recognition Awards and Tribute received a Certificate of Appreciation and a commemorative civic lapel pin.

- 30 -

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