



MUNICIPALITY *of the*  
COUNTY *of* KINGS

## 2024 Volunteer Nominations

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## Youth Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Kate Roberts**

Nominee contributes to:

- **Kate currently regularly on Saturday mornings volunteers with Acadia S.M.I.L.E.**
  - **The Acadia S.M.I.L.E. (Sensory Motor Instructional Leadership Experience) Program is an innovative, academic-based, yet volunteer-driven program that provides persons with varying disabilities a unique physical activity experience in order to improve their total development as individuals.**
- **KinderSkills program at Acadia.**
- **Both a board member and a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters Annapolis Valley Chapter.**
  - **The Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring programme provides children and youth with a supportive adult friend to talk to and share the experiences of growing up with. Through regular outings, a relationship is developed between the Big and the Little, that is built on trust and common interests, and is supported by our experienced Mentoring Coordinators. The result is a life-changing experience for both the mentor and the mentee.**
- **The Alexander Society**
  - **The Alexander Society is a charitable organization based in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Originally known as the Alexander Society for Special Needs, the society changed its name to the Alexander Society for Inclusive Arts in 2016 to reflect the social nature of what we have been doing – namely demonstrating ways we can all learn together through inclusive creative arts activities.**



Years of service: **1-4+**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

Kate is one of the most passionate and driven youth volunteers that I have come to know. Although I do not work with her directly in any of the organizations she volunteers with, I have had many occasions to talk to her about her volunteer work. I feel that the experiences that she has shared with me through her volunteer work and the connections she has made within our organization to connect her to see of this work speaks to her passion for volunteerism in her community, particularly with child and youth populations and those with diverse needs. Unlike many youth her age, she prioritizes her volunteer work and commitment to these organizations above social outings and friends, but still manages to maintain a solid volunteer-work-life balance. She has been so strong in her commitment to these organizations that she even prioritizes them above work schedules by ensuring that her employers are aware of her volunteer schedule and are able to plan accordingly so she does not jeopardize her commitment to either. The organizations that she volunteers with are particularly meaningful to her in that Kate's passion lies in working with children and youth, especially those with diverse needs or who may not have access to consistent or strong support in their lives outside of these programs. Her desire to make a difference in the lives of the children and youth she volunteers with is evident in her passion when she speaks about this work and in her efforts to be continually committed and involved. Although I do not count the total number of hours that Kate has put in with each of these organizations, and to be truthful, I'm not sure that she does either because I know that is not why she does it, I am certain that each hour is meaningful and impactful to both Kate and to the individuals she connects with during her volunteer work. Without people like Kate, who has a long life of volunteerism ahead of her, these community organizations and initiatives would not be able to thrive and contribute to the overall happy and healthy communities we all want to see in Kings County and in Nova Scotia.

## Youth Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Phoenix Barkhouse**

Nominee contributes to:

- **The creator and has led the NKEC Broadcasting initiative at Northeast Kings Education Centre - a club for live streaming of all the sports games in and outside of their school for over 4 years for 5 hours a week.**
- **Voiced announcements every day for the school for 6 years for 4 hours a week with the NKEC Media club at Northeast Kings Education Centre.**
- **Volunteered for the past 2 years with Valley Ghost Walks (Kentville) - history walks through Kentville where volunteers dress up as the ghosts of Kentville's history.**
- **Volunteered for the past 2 years with Windsor Trains (Windsor) - a number of miniature trains that they volunteer to drive around every Sunday from June to October.**
- **Volunteered for 7 years with Adventure Club at Kentville Church - a night for kids ages 4 to 13 to have fun learning about God every Wednesday from September to June.**
- **Royal Canadian Air Cadets at Camp Aldershot - Phoenix has been a member doing various volunteer activities for the past 6 years (4 hours a week).**



Years of service: **1-7+**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

Phoenix is a vibrant, passionate, and deeply caring individual and they commit themselves to every project and task with a positive leadership attitude. They are always willing to help those in need adding their own personal twist to things and they particularly enjoy helping to teach the next generation about things they wish they had known. Phoenix cares about cultivating a sense of community and inclusion and seeks out opportunities to play their part in multiple ways to make the community better. They saw a gap for the Broadcasting team and developed a plan and led their school to add broadcasting for all the school teams live streaming it for extended families and/or international students' families to be able to watch their child's games. As of this year they are now a broadcasting for 3 other schools in the Annapolis Valley!

## Youth Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Azlyn Hart**

Nominee contributes to:

**Annapolis Valley Frugal Moms Society helping many families fight hunger and the rising costs of living.**

Years of service: **2**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Piper is one of our junior Frugal moms. Piper has certainly been getting schooled in the finer side of Frugal Mom's, she's always there to help with pick-ups and drop-offs and is becoming quite efficient in loading and unloading vehicles. Even at such a young age Piper is a huge asset to the team.**



## **Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024**

Nominee Name: **Shelley Hardy**

Nominee contributes to:

- **Grew up in Lake Paul and has been a pillar of the community.**
- **Volunteered and helped the community members by helping facilitate groups to help community members who are sick and in need of items for example fundraising, bringing in wood or preparing meals.**
- **Has been a volunteer in the community for over twenty years and been a tireless volunteer for over ten years mostly having the volunteer position of President of the Lake Paul and Lake George Community Club.**

Years of service: **20+ years**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Shelley works many hours every week volunteering and managing the community hall. People see how positive and dedicated she is; when she needs help with a project, people are willing to step up and help which helps the whole surrounding communities.**



## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Nan Smith**

Nominee contributes to:

**Shannex Orchard Court is a 62-bed Long Term Care Facility in Kentville, NS.**

Years of service: **6-7 years**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Nan has been a dedicated, caring and innovative volunteer within our facility, who always puts the needs of the residents here first. She regularly comes to assist us with a variety of Recreation programs and often facilitates a special seasonal craft program - providing the supplies, with which, the residents create something personal and meaningful. Following her retirement as an elementary school teacher for many years, Nan had the desire to continue nurturing, caring, giving, comforting, and supporting others in a different environment. In addition, after seeing how her mother was well-cared for in another Shannex PCH, Nan decided that she would reach out to Shannex Orchard Court (closer to home) to provide stimulation and interaction for the residents here. She brings her lively and inspiring personality to brighten the days here for the residents. As well, she has brought the community into the residents' home in that she invites members of her Red Hat group to put on special functions for the residents here at least a couple of times a year. Her volunteer contributions to our facility are so great and we are so very thankful for her and these contributions.**



## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Valerie Despres**

Nominee contributes to:

- Valerie is a long-time member and past president of the Annapolis Valley African Violet Society, which next year will celebrate its 50th anniversary.
  - She is a qualified senior judge with the African Violet Society of America and in the past has judged many African violet shows within the Maritimes and at Canadian and US conventions.
  - Valerie has also served as a director and committee member of the African Violet Society of Canada over the years and has been a stalwart executive member within our local group.
- Valerie's greatest service is within her local Nicholsville community.



*Pictured above - Three Presidents AVAVS  
L-R: Karen Campbell, Cindy Schoults, and  
Valerie Despres*

Years of service: **Over 20 with the Annapolis Valley African Violet Society**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

Along with her husband Paul, Valerie runs the Nicholsville Community Hall and is very actively involved in organizing many of the groups which use this facility. These include but may not be limited to the following - rug hooking, knitting, a card group, the Nicholsville Garden Club, the recently dissolved Wilmot Garden Club, the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs, and a ukulele group which entertains at local senior's homes and hospitals. She is also involved in the Annapolis Valley Giant Vegetable Growers Association and the West Kings Community Fair, Tremont. Although Valerie has been involved with most of these organizations for many years, her role as a volunteer in the community was especially impactful during the recent covid years. Her service in organizing all of these groups which distracted and uplifted the members of her local community during such a difficult time is deserving of recognition, particularly as Valerie serves every organization to which she belongs with a quiet grace, often contributing not only her time and effort, but also her money for the benefit of others.

## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Gloria Field**

Nominee contributes to:

**Dwight Ross Elementary** is a local Kings County elementary school which is open to students grades pre-primary to grade 5. Students arrive each day to learn more about our Nova Scotia curriculum, make connections, build relationships with others, and learn through play.

Years of service: **3**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Gloria Field** is an educational assistant at Dwight Ross Elementary School that goes above and beyond daily. She has been working at the school for over 10 years. She can be found at school sorting items she has bought to support students' needs and interests. She is constantly programming for students and spending her hard-earned money on them. It can be anything from Paw Patrol characters, dinosaurs, snacks to clothing and footwear. Gloria loves to make a good social story for any child, including them in the story. She has constantly continued to work on her tech skills to meet her students' needs. Gloria is someone who forms strong relationships with the children she sees each day. She very quickly gets to know each and every student in the class and is always working with the students at their level. Gloria's constantly encouraging every student to do their best and makes taking risks with any student, age primary to five, comfortable. Gloria's heart is huge! When Gloria isn't making or providing programming materials for students she can be found collecting recyclables for our school. We are currently fundraising for a swing set which will cost over \$20,000.00. Gloria travels all over the Annapolis Valley collecting recyclables. She has raised thousands of dollars, with the help of her landlord's truck, toward our swing set purchase. She continues to bring the community together in this fundraiser; connecting with local businesses for grants and accessible swings, communicating with newspaper companies and using social media accounts to fundraise. Her most recent fundraiser was through a local motorcycle club with a 50/50. When Gloria's fundraising for the swings finishes, she will continue to raise money for bicycles. This will allow students a chance to ride a bike at school. The money will go toward purchasing bikes, helmets and a shed to store the bicycles. Gloria constantly continues to go above and beyond from the moment she wakes up to the moment she hits her pillow at night. We appreciate her!





## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Tracy Smith**

Nominee contributes to:

The Berwick Curling Club is a volunteer-run community organization which provides opportunities for residents of Berwick and surrounding areas to engage in a sport which enhances physical activity, mental agility and offers exceptionally important socialization with a variety of individuals during long Canadian winters. Our curling club boasts 200 members, plus a healthy Junior program, leagues where community members can either sign-up or drop-in to play with over 300 people accessing the facility weekly. We also welcome curlers from across the province to play in various bonspiels. Our club bustles with activity between October and April of each year but operates year-round with fundraisers and other activities.

Years of service: **7**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

Anyone who has had the opportunity to volunteer alongside Tracy over the past years, feels fortunate. She brings a positive, can-do, problem-solving attitude, an intellectual, process-driven and analytical business mind, mixed with dedication, humor, leadership and diplomacy. She also quietly demands respect and performance from others. It's a rare mix. Anyone near Tracy, sees her stepping to the plate without hesitation to help others and the Club - joining as a Board Director shortly after you began curling in 2017, as current Club Secretary, Bar Manager and most recently, Bar Scheduler. That spirit of generosity cultivates and inspires others to offer freely of themselves beyond which they might not have done otherwise. This creates a synergy, a positive feeling of being part of something bigger than oneself - a prime example is her creation of our volunteer team of bartenders who routinely jump in to help one another out at a moment's notice. And she always makes sure she is there to make others feel confident and successful in their volunteer roles through encouraging coaching and training. She has given countless volunteer hours to our Club - even during times when she hasn't been able to curl herself. It is impossible to thank Tracy enough for all that she has done and continue to do - we are beyond fortunate to have her as part of our curling family and the valley community.



## **Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024**

Nominee Name: **Sara Fraser**

Nominee contributes to:

**Scouting is about outdoor adventure and fun. Scouting youth also have a strong sense of civic responsibility and environmental awareness. From food and clothing drives to shoreline clean-ups, Scouts encourages youth to try new adventures, learn new skills, and challenge themselves.**

Years of service: **5**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Sara has been a registered volunteer with our scouting group for five years. This year she has taken on many new roles and has been a key person in program planning. Sara is involved with the beavers and cubs but is always willing to help with scouts too if needed. Sara attends all planning meetings and is first to volunteer to run projects, pick up materials, or organize events. Sara enjoys getting involved with fundraising and community service projects with the kids and is always there with ideas to make it better, or ways to get the kids involved.**

**Though Sara works full time, and has three children of her own, she still volunteers so much of her time, giving our youth members great adventures and experiences that scouting offers.**



**Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024**

Nominee Name: **Sherry Martin**

Nominee contributes to: **Annapolis Valley Frugal Moms Society helps families, seniors, and homeless with food, clothing, and household items, providing meals to those that are unhoused. Serving up to 100 people a day in the Kentville location.**

Years of service: **2**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Sherry, alongside her daughter and granddaughter work very hard feeding many families throughout the New Minas to Kentville area and beyond. Helping rescue over 330,000 pounds of food last year alone. Also baking fresh bread for our unhouses to make sandwiches for them, she also makes comfort blankets for families going through cancer. Sherry goes above beyond every day! Even when she should take a day to rest, she can be found moving food, doing counts, and manning food pop-ups for those in need.**



## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Melinda Cote**

Nominee contributes to:

- **Annapolis Valley Frugal Moms rescues food and teaches people how to garden and preserve.**
  - We do emergency hampers as well as at Christmas, Easter and back to school each year.
- **Salvation Army**

Years of service: **2 years with AVFM**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Annapolis Valley Frugal Moms:**

**Melinda, along with her mother and daughter, make up the team in North Alton. Melinda, in spite of her health issues, is always willing to help out with food rescues, clothing pick-ups, clothing give aways and fundraising. Melinda heads our fundraising team, and without her hardworking and dedication, we would not be able to accomplish some of the things we currently can as an organization.**

**Former youth and family services Director for the Salvation Army:**

**Melinda was my number one volunteer and it seems the trend has continued. Her personality and enthusiasm was infectious to the kids and continued on long after I moved away from the region. Reading of her current accolades, her track record sounds pretty consistent. In fact, one of the kids she led during my time with the Salvation Army actually became a youth worker herself and is doing the same thing for others! Imagine 18 years later and Melinda is still doing one of the things I knew her best for! She was an important part of my leadership and she was never paid a penny!**



## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Tara Hirtle**

Nominee contributes to:

**The Western Kings 4-H Project Club is a youth organization which encourages young people to become positive community citizens through the development of such skills as leadership, public speaking, and community service. Members choose a project, or projects, to complete and they participate in a variety of activities to work together and learn skills while having fun.**

Years of service: **Began as a supportive parent first, and now has 12 years as leader!**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

Kind, enthusiastic and compassionate are some of the words used to describe Tara Hirtle. She has been a dedicated lighthouse leader, served as chairperson of the Kings County Lighthouse Committee, been in charge of the County Horse Shows and volunteered at the Regional Lighthouse Boot Camp. As part of her leader responsibilities, Tara has volunteered with Roadside and Cemetery Clean-Ups, served at community suppers and Hospice Galas, and given back to the community through supervising at numerous other 4-H community activities. She has been instrumental in organizing a variety of lighthouse fundraisers and the club Christmas wreath fundraiser. Tara is an active member of the Kings County 4-H Council sitting on many committees including Joint Achievement Day planning, Lumbersports (formerly Woodsman), Tug-of-war and County Rally. She has promoted public speaking and demonstration skills, helping members with their presentations. She has volunteered her photography skills to capture photos for social media and 4-H historical memories. Provincially, Tara sat on the 100th Anniversary Committee for 4-H Nova Scotia's 100th celebration. She has volunteered at many Nova Scotia 4-H Shows and attended the National Leadership Event in Halifax. Tara has also volunteered on the committee for the Central Kings Community Graduation Event and served as Ringmaster and member of the Ring Crew for the Tremont Community Fair. As Tara says, it is "second nature" for her to volunteer and lend a hand whenever and wherever needed. She can be counted on to provide good advice and to step up when there is a job that needs to be done. She provides a well-organized experience for the 4-H members to live the motto 'Learn to do by Doing'. Tara encourages them to do their best in whatever they do...always with a warm smile and a positive word of encouragement.



## **Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024**

Nominee Name: **Ralph Comeau**

Nominee contributes to:

**Situated on the grounds of the Valley Regional Hospital in Kentville, Fidelis House has been offering a welcoming 'home away from home' for patients and their guests since 1992. We are a small, fairly low-profile organization with a big reach. Staffed around the clock by dedicated volunteers, and funded exclusively through donations, guests are only asked to contribute \$25 a night towards their stay. Our guest population consists primarily of senior citizens and those living in rural areas – and our services help them comfortably access medical care while keeping community connections strong. Last year alone, our guest nights totalled 4,200.**

Years of service: **10**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Served as volunteer in the day-to-day operating service; President of the Board of Directors-since 2016. Ralph is instrumental in establishing policy and importantly headed the Building Committee in the addition of 4 guest rooms - , a budget of \$4000,000, also instrumental in supervising the day-to-day construction. His services and management skills have been invaluable.**



## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **John Brown**

Nominee contributes to:

**The Burlington Community Club is all about community building. We strive to provide and maintain an accessible, welcoming community center and park that cater to the needs of all community members equally and foster the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the people in the community. Our hall is the hub of our community events.**

Years of service: **2**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Over 2 years ago John Brown and his family moved to Burlington from Melvern Square where he was an active member of their Community Association. John worked with youth through Junior Achievement. John also volunteered with 4H for 25-30 years where for he became a General Leader and a Project Leader. Although relatively new to Burlington, John put his leadership and volunteer skills to work right away. No matter what project we have going, John gets actively involved. John is the type of community volunteer who, if he sees something needs to be done or built or fixed, he does it. John's dedication to youth and inclusion is evidenced by his work as a volunteer and Board member with Outside the Box, a day program at the Burlington Hall for young adults with disabilities. He has encouraged our Board to have a strong focus on safety and security in all that we do. As a result he convinced our Board to install high speed internet so we have better communications in case of emergencies. Some of the attributes of community volunteerism are dedication, innovation, vision, and compassion. Our nominee for Volunteer of the year, John Brown, demonstrates all of these!**



## Volunteer of the Year Nomination 2024

Nominee Name: **Brenda Griffin**

Nominee contributes to:

**Brenda and Jim became members of the Hall's Harbour Community Development Association around 4.5 years back. They actively participated in meetings and served on the Board. During this period, the HHCD collaborated with Acadia University to devise a strategic plan. Brenda played a pivotal role in facilitating interactions between Acadia students and community members, organizing focus group meetings, and spearheading three Open House Public meetings to ensure community involvement in waterfront climate change initiatives. Despite living on a fixed income as a senior, Brenda's unwavering dedication and positivity shine through. She never hesitates to contribute ideas or solutions to community issues. The Board wholeheartedly recommends Brenda for the Volunteer of the Year Award, recognizing her selflessness and outstanding commitment.**



Years of service: **30+ years volunteering**

Nominator(s) describe why nominee is deserving:

**Brenda's major impact on the Board of the HHCD, is her ability to easily solve problems with a smile and common sense. Her positive energy is infectious and brings joy to the Board.**

**A former co-worker at SSG - Support Services Group Co-operative says, 'At that time, Brenda was a paid staff working for people with disabilities in the organization, but she also devoted a lot of extra volunteer time helping support other support workers in the organization. Over the years, I've known Brenda to continue this volunteer work as she set up or supported caregivers more broadly beyond SSG.' 'Brenda is certainly very worthy of recognition. She has chosen a career where support workers are not particularly well paid, with few benefits, but her focus has always been on the bigger picture, rather than her own personal interest.'**

**Volunteer History - from the nominee:**

**Being a 4-H member in my youth and as an adult taking a Community Service Worker Program, I quickly came to understand the value of volunteering. I knew other volunteer work had a positive impact on my life in Kings County.**

**At Central Kings Rural High school, I was the assistant treasurer for the student council.**

**During my forty years of working in Human Services I enjoyed helping others.**

**I volunteer for the Special Olympics to help plan events.**

**Around 1993 I took a year off work.**

**Instead of travel I wanted to volunteer learning new skills in my area. I helped Stephen Coldwell who was working for Flower Cart on a grant. Present a Volunteer Link Proposal by having a meeting and one on one conversation with everyone in Kings County. Also, that year I volunteered as a phone worker for Valley Care Line which was in Middleton. As a volunteer we listened to and provided information for those with mental health concerns.**

**Being a family caregiver Doris Davidson and I started and begin being Co-facilitators of Kings County Caregiver Support Group in 2001 We met in New Minas Civic Center and Evergreen Nursing Home, but since Covid, is currently available by phone.**

**About 202 I join the work of Kings Volunteer Resource Center (at the time it was in Kentville at the Municipally Building, but now it is in New Minas at Country Fair Mall). I am currently a working board member on the Education Committee which plans online workshops and Volunteer Symposium at Kingstec. I Chair the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee since 2020. It is important to me that everyone feels they can seek out volunteer opportunities. And last year for a few months acted as Interim Chair. KVRC mission is to inspire and lead growth of a culture of volunteerism in the community. KVRC also hosts Volunteer NS.**

**During Covid joined the Halls Harbour Community Development Association as a board of Director. Feeling it important to support where you live.**

**Though out my life I enjoyed volunteer work and helping others. As a family caregiver, sometimes we have to be creative in how that work gets done. When you are a caregiver, you remind yourself to care for yourself too. For me finding ways to give back to my community is caring for me too! I know everyone has something they can contribute to life in Kings County!**