

Spirit of Volunteerism

Previous Years' Nominees & Recipients

We take the opportunity on this, our 5th anniversary year, to remember the exemplary nominees and recipients from previous years. They are truly the foundation on which the distress line movement is built.

2008

Sherman Brown	Telecheck Dufferin Distress Centre/Wellington Dufferin	Nominee
Sandra Conroy	Telecare Distress Centre, Brampton	Recipient
Marie Gurfinkel	Distress Centre of Toronto (North Branch)	Nominee
Stacey Harris	Distress Centre of Windsor-Essex County	Nominee
Phyllis Hemmingway	Telecare Cambridge Distress Line	Nominee
Carly Hicks	Distress Centre Niagara	Nominee
Margaret Knechtel	Distress Centre / Wellington Dufferin	Nominee
Pankej Mehra	Oakville Distress Centre	Recipient
Steve Raff	Distress Centre Niagara	Nominee
Charles Ryan	Distress Centre Durham	Nominee
Cheryl Ryan	Distress Centre Durham	Recipient
Joan Schrier	Distress Centre of Ottawa Region	Nominee
Chris Springer	Distress Centre, Crisis Services of Waterloo Region	Nominee
Henry Van Der Werff	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Hira Verma	Telecare Distress Centre, Brampton	Nominee
Lesley-Ann Zakoor	Distress Centre of Windsor-Essex County	Young Adult Volunteer Recipient

2010

Michael Bennet	Distress Centre of Windsor-Essex County	Young Adult Volunteer Recipient
Andrew Brennan	Community Torchlight Wellington-Dufferin	Nominee
Karen Cressman	Community Torchlight Wellington-Dufferin	Nominee
John Davis	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Anslem DeSouza	Toronto Distress Centre	Nominee
Sue Duchesnay	Distress Centre Durham	Recipient
Stephanie Gordon	Toronto Distress Centres-North Branch	Nominee
Wendy Guilemette	Community Torchlight Wellington-Dufferin	Nominee
Catharine MacLeod	Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region	Recipient
Dorothy McRae	Scarborough Distress Centre	Nominee
Tom Morris	Durham Distress Centre	Recipient
Christopher Pavia	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Elizabeth Penn	Telephone Aid Line Kingston	Young Adult Volunteer Nominee
Ron Pritchard	Distress Centre, Scarborough	Nominee
Paula Robertson	Distress Centre Durham	Young Adult Volunteer Nominee
Mathura Thiagarajah	Distress Centre, Scarborough	Nominee
Sue Turner	Distress Centre Lanark, Leeds & Grenville	Nominee
Dana Yates	Toronto Distress Centre (Downtown)	Nominee

2009

Nicole Cabral	Distress Centre Durham	Young Adult Volunteer Recipient
Leslie Evans	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Carol Edgar	Toronto Distress Centre	Nominee
Bill Jarvis	Toronto Distress Centre	Recipient
Marc LaChance	Telecare Distress Centre (Brampton)	Nominee
Jennifer Lindley	Distress Centre Niagara	Nominee
Christine Moore	Oakville Distress Centre	Recipient
Marilyn Oldham	North Halton Distress Centre	Nominee
Cindy Slavik	Distress Centre of Windsor-Essex County	Recipient
Sandy Small Proudfoot	Community Torchlight, Telecheck Dufferin	Nominee
Harpreet Priya Sandhu	Telecare Distress Centre (Brampton)	Nominee
Faren Hale Vokey	Telecare Distress Centre (Brampton)	Nominee
Nicholas White	Toronto Distress Centre (North Branch)	Nominee

2011

Enayat Amiri	Toronto Distress Centres, Scarborough Branch	Young Adult Volunteer Nominee
Russell Baker	Community Torchlight, Distress Centre Wellington/Dufferin	Nominee
Sheila Boocock	Oakville Distress Centre	Recipient
Adam Booth	Toronto Distress Centres, Central Branch	Nominee
Kay Burke	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Beth Carr	Durham Distress Centre	Nominee
Caitlin Dollar	Distress Centre of Windsor-Essex County	Young Adult Volunteer Nominee
John Freeman	Telephone Aid Line Kingston (TALK)	Nominee
Victoria Freeman	Telephone Aid Line Kingston (TALK)	Young Adult Volunteer Recipient
John Harper	Toronto Distress Centres Central Branch	Recipient
Dominic Mitges	Community Torchlight, Distress Centre Wellington/Dufferin	Nominee
Madeleine Staffieri	Community Torchlight, Distress Centre Wellington/Dufferin	Young Adult Volunteer Nominee
Nick Taptelis	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Carol Thompson	Toronto Distress Centres, North Branch	Recipient

Spirit of Volunteerism

The Eric Hotson Lifetime Achievement Award

Distress Centres Ontario's board, staff and membership have the pleasure each year of honouring volunteers from our member centres who exemplify the Spirit of Volunteerism. Over the past several years the selection committee has been struck by the many attributes these individuals possess. We have also noticed that, in some years, individuals are nominated who are shining reflections of this special spirit, and also share this spirit with their centre and community for many years.

In this, the 5th anniversary year, we created the category of Lifetime Achievement to recognize those special individuals who have supported their centres for many years and in many ways. It is our distinct pleasure to name this award – The Eric Hotson Lifetime Achievement Award.

A bit about Eric

Eric Hotson holds the distinction of being the longest serving volunteer with Distress Centre Oakville. Since October 1983, he has made a huge difference in the lives of clients and volunteers, and at the centre itself. Eric is an exemplar of volunteerism; eternally helpful, and an excellent ambassador for the Distress Centre Oakville.

Oakville's Executive Director says, "While Eric began as a distress line volunteer, his skills, experience, and passion to help quickly snowballed into Eric contributing in many ways to help our centre."

In his 29 years volunteering at the Oakville DC, Eric has contributed thousands of hours to ensure the success of Distress Centre Oakville, beginning with handling calls on the distress lines, then moving into fundraising, community outreach, volunteer training, facilitating, and serving on the board of directors. Through it all, Eric has remained patient, humble, and caring.

As Oakville's training director, Eric has trained over 500 volunteers, runs two seven-week training sessions per year, and develops and maintains his centre's volunteer training manual. He has helped create new programs and best practices, and was involved in the development and delivery of customized communication skills workshops that the centre offers in the community. Eric has helped shape the direction of Distress Centre Oakville. Eric also works with the Oakville board and staff to develop and implement the new Telecheck service and future on-line crisis services.

Eric supports his centre's fundraising events, helping run bingo and wine tasting events, and even puts his handyman skills to work when needed - Eric is an expert carpenter and often builds and repairs whatever is needed for DC Oakville. A few years ago, he designed and created a Mouse-Hole Mini-Putt game that is still used at community events as a fun way to draw kids (and adults) to the Oakville DC's information table. Eric's involvement in fundraising makes events fun and memorable.

Now retired, Eric's expertise in human resources and policy development has been invaluable to the Oakville board. Staff often depends on Eric's experience, wise counsel, and human resources knowledge.

Eric has excellent communication and leadership skills. He is considered a renaissance volunteer, and "a true gentleman with a terrific sense of humour"; he is insightful, positive, thoughtful, and resourceful, using his many skills and talents in many different areas of volunteer work at the Oakville centre.

And Eric volunteering doesn't stop with his centre. For the past five years Eric has tirelessly supported DCO association-wide programs including the Volunteer Management Committee and its province-wide focus group initiative. He has been a cornerstone of the Spirit of Volunteerism program and everyone who works with Eric is appreciative of his fair-minded, studied and supportive approach.

Eric received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award in 2008 for 25 years of volunteer service with Distress Centre Oakville. Now, it is Distress Centres Ontario's pleasure to name this special recognition of a lifetime of achievement in Eric Hotson's honour - A distinction now and into the future.