

2019 GC Award Winners Announced

24 June 2019

For Immediate Release

The 2019 GC Awards were announced at Green Communities Canada's (GCC) Annual General Meeting, 24 June. The awards recognize the many champions who work and volunteer with GCC and its member organizations.

Award winners:

Green Community Member of the Year - Reep Green Solutions, Kitchener, ON
Reep, which is marking its 20th anniversary in 2019, excels at promoting environmental action through community engagement.

For the past 10 years, Reep has co-led Waterloo Region's local climate action plan. This year, the collective created an ambitious GHG emissions reduction target that was unanimously approved by the four largest municipalities in Waterloo Region.

In 2018 Reep won the Perfect Pitch Boot Camp competition and used its well-honed pitch to secure funding for Project Neutral, a platform that answers the question, "What can I do?" about climate change.

Reep's RAIN program has grown into a multi-tentacled department called Green Infrastructure that works with municipalities and homeowners to mitigate flooding.

Congratulations and best wishes for continued success.

Award criteria

This award is for an organization that demonstrates innovation in programming, partnerships and marketing, and successful local community (businesses, households) or broader transformation (policy, government).

Environmental Lifetime Achievement Award - Paul Parker, Reep Green Solutions

The environment has no greater champion than Paul Parker, a professor, community advocate, and strong voice for a sustainable future.

20 years ago Paul co-founded the Residential Energy Efficiency Project which has since evolved into Reep Green Solutions. Paul has been a volunteer on Reep's Board of Directors ever since, and served as Chair for 5 years. He's also a former member of GCC's Board of Directors.

Paul's personal life is rooted in sustainability reflected by his lifestyle and transportation choices.

Award criteria

This award is for an individual who demonstrates through work and achievements a lifetime contribution to improving the environment.

Innovation Award - GreenUP, Peterborough, ON

GreenUP is a champion of innovative approaches to community sustainability through neighbourhood-scale projects.

Projects such as Ready for Rain, Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods, and NeighbourPLAN are examples of initiatives that spark on-the-ground transformation to long-term sustainability.

These programs engage diverse stakeholders and strengthen relationships between residents, community organizations, and municipal partners, leading to long-term collaborations.

The programs also offer tangible opportunities for the residents of Peterborough to take collective action, whether through developing a community garden or creating a neighbourhood vision.

Award criteria

This award is for an organization that demonstrates innovation in programming, partnerships, marketing and events.

Outstanding Staff Person Award - Heather Ray, GreenUP

Heather is GreenUP's Manager of Water Programs and is a great mentor and a passionate advocate for GCC programs.

Her Depave Paradise project in Peterborough won this year's Ontario Business Improvement Area Association Award for the best Large-scale Streetscape and Public Realm Improvement.

Heather's positive attitude, passion for the environment, and work to foster and support program collaborations make her a true "Ray" of sunshine!

Award criteria

This award is for a staff person who has demonstrated through his/her work and achievements the strongest commitment to a Green Community bringing about positive change and impact to the organization.

Youth Engagement Award - Green Action Centre, Winnipeg, MB

For more than 34 years, Green Action Centre has focused on educating Manitobans on green living, and much of that focus has been dedicated to youth. Its approach is science-based messaging delivered in a fun and exciting manner.

GAC has engaged with young people at dozens of schools, day camps, drop in centres, and with extra-curricular groups, such as Girl Guides and Boy Scouts.

In the last school year, GAC's programs reached 8,766 students in Winnipeg and surrounding areas, as well as 718 students and 46 teachers in First Nation communities.

To extend its reach to youth Green Action Centre has used social media, and has partnered with organizations such as Take Pride Winnipeg, the Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization of Winnipeg, and the Winnipeg Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy Program

Award criteria

This award is for a member that excels at engaging youth in programming, not only in school specific programming, but also in day camps and other organizational programming.

Outstanding Board Person - Melissa Durrel, Reep Green Solutions

Melissa is a dedicated communications, government relations and fundraising mentor.

Her extensive municipal, political and community knowledge, combined with her can-do attitude and 'let's dive in' approach has improved Reep's operations and greatly contributed to Reep's success.

Award criteria

This award is for a board member who has demonstrated through his/her work and achievements the strongest commitment to a Green Community providing exceptional stewardship to the organization.

Spectacular Failure - ecoSuperior Light the Night program

The goal of Light the Night was to increase cycling safety by giving away free bicycle lights to people who needed them and/or couldn't afford them.

However, a few things went wrong:

- There was confusion over where the lights would be available
- 40% of the lights didn't work
- There was a clear gap between the promotional plan and the target audience.

The good news is there was a triumphant redemption.

Using lessons learned, ecoSuperior made improvements to the program and was able to:

- Reach more cyclists who couldn't afford lights by working with the United Way to distribute lights at food banks and centres working with low-income families and youth; and
- Supply lights to cyclists riding at night without lights. Thunder Bay Police helped by distributing 200 light sets instead of tickets to cyclists riding without lights.

And volunteers tested all of the lights tested all of the lights to make sure they worked prior to distribution.

Award criteria

This award is for a program, partnership, campaign, etc. that crashed and burned, but was a valiant effort.

Resilience Awards - Given to GC member organizations that have continued to succeed despite challenges, thanks to a host of qualities including flexibility and adaptation, and have reached a milestone in longevity.

Rideau Environmental Action League	30 years
Red Squirrel Conservation Services	20 years
Reep Green Solutions	20 years

GCC also recognized staff and board members with 10 or more years of service.

30+ years

Barb Hicks, Rideau Environmental Action League
Peter Au, Rideau Environmental Action League

25-29 years

Toni Ellis, Elora Environment Centre
Randall Howard, Elora Environment Centre
Don Eaton, Elora Environment Centre
Michele Rich, Environment Network

20-24 years

Paul Parker, Reep Green Solutions
Ellen Mortfield, EcoSuperior
Bryan Heppler, EcoSuperior
Dr. Antony Gillies, EcoSuperior
Brent Kopperson, Windfall Ecology Centre
Jennifer McLellan, Elora Environment Centre
Clifford Maynes, Green Communities Canada
Sharyn Inward, Green Communities Canada

15-19 years

Mary Jane Patterson, Reep Green Solutions
Jen Atkinson, Windfall Ecology Centre
Helen Doyle, Windfall Ecology Centre
Jose Etcheverry, Windfall Ecology Centre
Abby Stec, Environment Network
Kerri MacDonald, Environment Network

10-14 years

Karen Schechter, Rideau Environmental Action League
Alan Leonard, Rideau Environmental Action League
Ashley Priem, EcoSuperior
Beth McKechnie, Green Action Centre
Peter Sundberg, City Green Solutions

Chris Birchall, City Green Solutions
Dawn Stewart, City Green Solutions
Brianna Salmon, GreenUP
Ivan Bateman, GreenUP
Ramesh Makhija, GreenUP
Brendan Schaefer, Reep Green Solutions
Bruce Mitchell, Reep Green Solutions
Jodi Cain, Windfall Ecology Centre
Kathy Maggs, Elora Environment Centre
Peter Termeulen, Red Squirrel Conservation Services
Sé Keohane, Green Communities Canada
Alix Taylor, Green Communities Canada and GreenUP
Mary Anna Zakula, Green Communities Canada

GCC salutes this year's winners. Winners receive a certificate and bragging rights for the year.

Green Communities Canada is a national association of community organizations working with homeowners, businesses, governments and communities to reduce our impact on the environment.