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ONTARIO MEDIA RELEASE

APPLAUDING OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

2019 Kidney Foundation volunteer award winners announced

[MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO – April 20, 2020] - From April 19 to 25, National Volunteer Week, The Kidney Foundation will celebrate the dedication and commitment of our volunteer community. Volunteers give of their time in support of many programs and activities and make it possible for The Kidney Foundation to fulfill its mission.

“The awards recognize volunteers who showcase caring, leadership and philanthropy within their respective communities to benefit those touched by kidney disease” said Susan Tkachuk, Chair of the Ontario Branch Volunteer Recognition Committee. “Please join me in offering a virtual round of applause to our 2019 award winners.”

Outstanding Volunteer Award: Anna Cheung, Marci Oliverio, Wayne & Heather Sampson, Elda Sauder, Teresa Walchuk

The Outstanding Volunteer Awards go to volunteers within the community for their devoted support of The Foundation.

Anna Cheung is a long-time supporter and volunteer with The Kidney Foundation’s Chinese Renal Association. Anna uses her skills and passion to provide extraordinary financial and administrative support to many Chapter events including the Chinese New Year’s Dinner, education events and fundraisers. She is always willing to lend a helping hand and has quietly supported the work of The Kidney Foundation for the past 20 years. Anna participates in the Kidney Walk in Scarborough each year and is one of the top fundraisers in her community.

Marci Oliverio seems to encompass the spirit of volunteerism. She is always available and willing to come out and assist with an event or rally support with her network of friends and family. She has shared her story locally to help raise awareness of kidney disease and transplantation and acts as a tremendous ambassador for the Foundation. She understands the importance of fundraising and supporting kidney research. She participates each year at The Kidney Walk in Sault Ste. Marie.



Wayne & Heather Sampson have led the Peer Support Group (Coffee Club) in Oshawa for over 20 years. They are dedicated volunteers and have provided support to many patients at the group meetings or on the phone. Wayne and Heather liaise with the local renal unit at Lakeridge Health and have helped organize patient activities like the annual Christmas Party and Patient BBQ in Durham Region. They've also supported the annual Kidney Walk in Durham Region and encourage others to join.

Elda Sauder has been a volunteer for over 25 years in the Waterloo Wellington & District Chapter. She was a March Drive Canvasser and consistently raised over \$500 each year. Elda also volunteered for the local Kidney Health Month kickoff events as well would spend the day at the malls in the area for kit pick up and drop off. Although there is no longer a door to door canvass, she continues to fund raise for the walks reaching out to her march drive contacts. Elda is a wonderful supporter of the Foundation, volunteering at many events and Kidney Walks throughout the year. She is a constant source of support always willing to pitch in and lend a hand.

Teresa Walchuk has volunteered with the Brant County Chapter since its inception in 2011. She has been a leadership volunteer for many years. "Teresa the Tornado" as she is affectionately known, warms up the crowd at the annual walk each year. She gets everyone revved up and ready to go and cheers the walkers along through the route. A retired nurse from the local unit, Teresa continues to be actively engaged in the Chapter ensuring that patients know about the resources and supports available from The Kidney Foundation. She was instrumental in organizing the annual Patient and Staff Christmas Party for 20 years and has helped form partnerships with the local legion and Knights of Columbus

Programs and Service Award: Claire Chartrand (Niagara Health System), Scarborough Health Network Nephrology Program

This year, The Kidney Foundation of Canada presented to **Claire Chartrand, Renal Dietitian at the Niagara Health System** with the Programs and Services award. Claire has been pivotal to the success of the Renal Cooking and Nutrition Education workshops in St. Catharines. Upon hearing that we were looking to start the workshops through other members of the staff, Claire reached out and said she was very interested in partnering with us and the PC Cooking school to provide an interactive, educational and fun cooking experience for renal patients. Claire researched and tested the recipes at home and provided participants with a delicious three course meal. She created recipe booklets, helped promote the event throughout Niagara Health to all pre-dialysis and dialysis patients, and answered any/all questions that came up regarding nutrition at the workshop. Without her dedication and support, the workshops would not have been as successful -the demand is high -and our relationship with Niagara Health would not be as strong.



Our second Programs and Services award was presented the **Scarborough Health Network (SHN), Nephrology Program**. As the largest renal program in North America, the Scarborough Health Network has been very successful coping with tremendous capacity issues. They have worked with The Kidney Foundation to ensure that patients and their families have access to the resources and support they need. They worked with the Foundation to launch two Peer Support groups (a general group and a Chinese Support Group). In addition, they have welcomed Peer Support into their multi-care Kidney Clinic. The collaboration between The Kidney Foundation and Scarborough's Nephrology Program continues to grow and support the patients.

Excellence in Fundraising Award, Mitch Garber

Mitch Garber's Charity Haunted House in support of the Kidney Foundation is truly a sight to be seen on Halloween night according to the 1000+ annual visitors that it attracts! In his effort to scare the masses he also seeks to raise awareness and funds for The Kidney Foundation. When this husband and father of three was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease in 2013, it changed his life completely. Since then, Mitch has raised over \$55,000 for The Kidney Foundation with the support of many amazing community and media partners in Milton and beyond. With an unrelenting passion for making difference in the lives of people just like him, Mitch's enthusiasm, leadership in fund raising and continued efforts truly exemplify the Excellence in Fundraising Award.

Kidney Walk Award of Excellence: Alisa Cheddi, Tracy Patrick, Christopher Pennington, Angela Pestowka, Sutherland Family, Ericka Swaby, Team Hero's and Warrior's, Team Luz Mueca

The Kidney Walk award is given to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the overall results of the Kidney Walks including financial, human resource, new partnerships, in-kind, and/or public awareness.

Alisa Cheddi took a leadership role in organizing the Brampton Kidney Walk in 2019. She recruited friends and family to support the effort as volunteers and walkers. Alisa secured donations from local businesses to ensure that there was food available that met dietary restrictions and prizes for the walkers. From mapping the route, to volunteer recruitment, she helped execute the walk and created a memorable event for the Brampton community.

Tracy Patrick has been a dedicated supporter of the Sault Ste. Marie walk for many years. Tracy donated a kidney to her sister Kelly in 1999 and over the years has contributed significantly to the success of the Kidney Walk. Tracy and her family have made it their mission to help raise kidney health awareness and funds to help others. Tracy's sister Kelly travels each year from Toronto to the Sault to attend the walk and celebrate together.



Christopher Pennington and his Crew have raised \$60,000 since becoming involved with the Walks. Christopher continues to increase his role in outreach and advocacy for the Kidney Foundation, helping to organize the Goderich Kidney Walk, volunteering at the local health fair and promoting kidney health awareness in local print, television and radio interviews, Christopher has also been promoting healthy living in his school and recruiting local youth, including his hockey team, to take part in kidney health challenges.

Angela Pestowka attended her first Kidney Walk in Chatham-Kent in 2018. That first year, she and her team, were responsible for raising half of the revenue of the entire Chatham-Kent Walk. The same holds true for 2019, when she joined the walk committee and also became the Ambassador for that year. The Chatham-Kent Kidney Walk would not be nearly as successful as it has been the past two years without Angela. Her enthusiasm is infectious, she sends a positive message about living a healthy life with kidney disease.

Sutherland Family (Catherine, Meghan, Colleen & Heather) - The Sutherland family has been a mainstay in the Pembroke community for many years raising funds and awareness for the Kidney Foundation. The Sutherlands have coordinated the Pembroke Kidney Walk for over a decade, resulting in consistently exceeding the event fund raising goal each year. Their support and championing of The Kidney Foundation knows no bounds. In addition to their assistance with the Kidney Walk, they organize the annual Don Sutherland Memorial Slo-Pitch Tournament to raise support for The Foundation.

No task is too difficult for **Ericka Swaby**. After a life changing event at age 8, Ericka vowed to help others through fundraising. In 2014, when she suffered kidney failure, she turned her efforts to fundraising for the Toronto General Hospital's Hemodialysis Unit to acknowledge the care provided by Drs. Richardson and Chan. In 2018, Ericka single-handedly raised a record-breaking \$16,148 for the Kidney Foundation's Toronto Walk. In 2019, she responded to our call to 'break her own personal record' and raised an incredible \$21,435. What's her secret to success? Ericka is relentless and works tirelessly to connect with her donors over the phone, via mail and email. Ericka is truly an inspiration.

Carlos Azevedo and his team, **Hero's and Warriors** are a dedicated and inspirational group of individuals working to make a difference to those affected by kidney disease. Every year, Hero's and Warriors, join the Hamilton Walk in support of the Kidney Foundation, with multiple participants reaching the Champion level. In 2019, they raised an astounding \$7,485 to help in the fight against kidney disease. Carlos and his sister & teammate, Lucy Braga, were also Kidney Walk Ambassadors and shared their stories with others on the website and during opening ceremonies. They are an inspiration to others and an important part of the Kidney Foundation family.



Each year, one of the largest teams at the Ottawa Kidney Walk is the **Luz Mueca Kidney Walk Team**. Spearheaded by Team Captain, Ellen Barber, family and friends of Luz Mueca walk in her memory to raise funds to support the Luz Mueca Memorial Bursary Endowment. This endowment provides kidney patients or their family members in Eastern Ontario with a bursary to offset the cost of post-secondary education each year. In December 2018, members of team provided items for the annual patient present program and visited the dialysis units in Ottawa to spread holiday cheer and distribute the gifts. This team represents what the Kidney Walk is all about, bringing the kidney community together.

Ontario Branch Award for Leadership in Philanthropy Award is presented to Werger Realty Ltd. (Allen & Jerry Werger)

Werger Realty Ltd. began supporting The Kidney Foundation in 1997 after responding to a direct mail appeal. In 2009, they began supporting the annual gala as a corporate sponsor, contributing close to \$70,000 over the years. Their leadership, collaboration and forethought to strengthen support of the Kidney Foundation's mission makes this special recognition well-deserved.

Outstanding Partner Awards: Cellular Point/Value Mobile (Bobby and Vinny Maker) and Kenny U-Pull (Doug Crawford)

Bobby and Vinny Maker, owners of **Cellular Point/Value Mobile** have supported The Kidney Foundation for many years, donating in excess of \$60,000. Their decision to support The Kidney Foundation stemmed from a personal connection to kidney disease and their belief that it was important to give back to an organization that has meaning to them. They have opened doors in the South Asian community to further generate awareness and funds for the Foundation.

Kenny U Pull are best known as our long time Kidney Car Partner in the Ottawa region where they have worked with us to handle thousands of vehicle donations. They're also the trusted Partners for Quebec and Atlantic Canada Branches of the Foundation. Through this involvement, they have become keenly aware of the significance of kidney disease and have consistently demonstrated their support outside of Kidney Car as well. In the past few years, Kenny U Pull has sponsored the Ottawa and Cornwall Kidney Walks and have donated to the Holiday Hampers program, which provides kidney families in need with grocery store gift cards, to help offset the cost of food during the holiday season.

Excellence in Leadership Award, Sam Watt

The Excellence in Leadership award is given in recognition of an individual or group who exemplifies outstanding leadership in advancing the work of the Foundation. It recognizes those who are committed to excellence in their service and exhibits integrity, collaboration and performs at a level that inspires others. **Sam Watt** is a long-time, dedicated volunteer with The Kidney Foundation's Chinese Renal Association. As a nephrology social worker, Sam is aware of the resources and support available through The Kidney Foundation and promotes activities, educational resources and peer



support to patients and caregivers. He actively reaches out to other organizations and hospitals to build partnerships to support the community. As Chair of the Chinese Renal Association from 2012-2019, he recruited and welcomed many new CRA members with a wide range of skills including nurses, dietitians, social workers, media. He encourages teamwork and has helped make the Chapter feel like a family. Sam uses his voice within the Chinese community to raise kidney health awareness through various platforms including newspapers, newsletters, radio and television interviews.

Award of Merit, Mike Mastronardi

The Award of Merit is presented in recognition of an individual or group who has helped the kidney community realize the vision and mission of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. **Mike Mastronardi** is a committed volunteer. He has served as the Windsor & District Chapter President for the last five years and sits on the Ontario Branch Board. Locally, he voluntarily sits on every fundraising committee. Mike attends and/or volunteers at almost every function or event- whether it is a Mall Display, a Health Fair, or a networking event to represent the Foundation to one of our partners or a fundraiser. He is always the last volunteer to leave an event, staying until the very end. Mike shares his story and through his dedication and passion, he inspires others.

Outstanding Chapter of the Year, Hamilton & Niagara District Chapters

The Chapter of the Year award is presented to a Chapter area which has demonstrated sustained commitment and has impacted the Ontario Branch in a demonstrated way. **The Hamilton & Niagara District Chapters** had a great year in 2019, not only with fundraising events such as the annual Kidney Walk, but the volunteers also supported a variety of third party and chapter organized events. They also hosted very successful education events like Renal friendly cooking. The volunteers along with employee Julie Bertoia, are willing to help other Chapters and share best practices so that others can build events based on their experience.

President's Award, Daniela Piotrowski

The award is presented to an individual selected by the Branch President in recognition of an individual or group who has assisted the president in advancing the work of The Foundation. This year's award was presented to **Daniela Piotrowski**. Daniela is a tireless asset to the Foundation who provides incredible support to the Central Ontario Chapter and Branch Walks. 2020 was a banner year, generating \$975,000. In addition to her Branch-wide oversight, she and her small team personally execute almost one third of the 35 walks in Ontario.

She is respected by her colleagues across the Branch and has fostered and cultivated long-term relationships with key stakeholders in the Central Chapter catchment area. She also sits on a number of National committees and provides guidance to Walks across Canada.



Through the unwavering compassion and devotion of volunteers and community partners, The Kidney Foundation can provide programs and services to those touched by kidney disease. Volunteers play a crucial role in improving the lives of those affected by kidney disease and, as the roots of The Foundation, help the kidney community grow and prosper each year.

About The Kidney Foundation of Canada

Excellent kidney health, optimal quality of life, and a cure for kidney disease. For over 50 years, this vision has guided us to be a collaborative, inventive and focused leader in the development of programs, services, research opportunities and awareness campaigns that have had a positive impact on the millions of Canadians living with, or at risk of developing kidney disease.

The Foundation's national research program has grown to become one of the most important sources of funding for scientists conducting kidney-related research. We are also committed to providing education, information and support about kidneys and kidney disease. For more information, visit kidney.ca.

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