



For Immediate Release

January 6, 2020

2019 Civic Recognition Awards Presented

The 2019 City of Yorkton Civic Recognition Awards were presented at a reception prior to the regular meeting of Council Monday, January 6, in the lobby at City Hall.

Each year the City's Civic Recognition Awards acknowledge and reward those who have made outstanding contributions to the City through various capacities, within City limits, over the past year. There are three award categories, Adult, Youth and Group with nominations received from residents. Candidates were evaluated by a four member panel including Councillors Mitch Hipsley and Quinn Haider, and citizen representatives Gerry Pepler and Tom Seeley. Parameters for nomination include participation in clubs, associations or volunteer organizations; any notable act or accomplishment in support of community services; any notable accomplishment in her/his profession; and how the nominee has served as an ambassador for the Yorkton community.

This year's winners include Connor Watrych, in the Youth Category, Mark Schendel in the Adult Category, and the Soup Haven Lunch Program Inc. in the Group Category. Yorkton Coop provided gift certificates to the winners of the Youth and Adult Categories.

Connor is a grade 12 student at Yorkton Regional High School and will be graduating in June, 2020. He is student body president and captain of the football and basketball teams. Connor has also championed his own Foundation "Touchdown for kids", an organization that raises money for less fortunate youth that cannot afford to play football. Connor donates \$5 for every touchdown scored by the Raider Gridders (he is the quarter back), which is matched by a number of local sponsors. At the end of this 2019 season, the Raider Gridders had scored 45 touchdowns and also took the Provincial Championship! Connor's foundation raised around \$4000. The money is divided into scholarships that will cover team fees, equipment costs, attending football camps or even your first Rider game.

Connor is also an honor roll student, works at the Gallagher Centre's Access Communications Waterpark as a lifeguard, referees youth football and volunteers his time to coach youth football.

Mark Schendel saw the need for a wheel chair accessible swing in Yorkton. He approached local businesses and obtained sponsorships, as well as organized many student led fundraising activities to make the dream come to life. Thanks to his vision, organization and commitment, Yorkton now has a wheel chair accessible swing located at M C Knoll School, which is available to all members of the community.

Mark also wanted to do something to honour the dedication and sacrifice of the Canadian Armed Forces men and women. He approached the Yorkton Terriers with the idea of a game played wearing camo-jerseys. The Terrier organization loved the idea, but for that he needed sponsorship. With great support from the community and local businesses, he obtained the jerseys and approached the City with the second part of his idea - a black seat which will be left empty at all arena events to signify and honour our Canadian Armed Forces men and women.

Based on the popularity of the NHL's outdoor hockey games, Mark decided that he would like to simulate this experience for the players in Yorkton Minor Hockey. Once again Mark went to work to make it happen. He arranged outdoor ice time, zambonis, heaters, referees, food and drink vendors, music, etc. This year's classic will feature a prominent local business as a headline sponsor. This, coupled with the proceeds of the 50/50 draw, will be used to send every Yorkton Minor Hockey Novice player to a hockey school. This will allow kids who would not normally be able to participate in a hockey school to get to do so.

The Soup Haven Lunch Program was launched in April, 1998 in response to an apparent need for school age kids to have enough nutritious food. Today, the Soup Haven is a non-denominational, non-for-profit, charitable organization that delivers nourishing lunches to some 250 local school children everyday. Without this service, these children would go hungry, as for many, it is their only daily meal.

The Soup Haven Lunch Program is overseen by a Board of volunteer community members, a small part-time management team as well as a large group of caring volunteers from all around the City of Yorkton.

Over the years the Soup Haven has received generous financial support from many local businesses, organizations and citizens along with grants from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.

Congratulations to this year's three Civic Recognition Award winners!

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