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Recognize a volunteer in your community

AIRDRIE, AB - The City of Airdrie is encouraging residents to acknowledge volunteers in Airdrie who are making a difference in someone's life or in the community with this year's Volunteer of the Year Award.

"It is so important to recognize volunteers who willingly sacrifice their time and energy, dedicating themselves to vital service in the community," says Clay Aragon, Family Community Support Services (FCSS) Coordinator for the City of Airdrie. "Airdrie is a volunteer-driven community."

Results from the community needs assessment conducted in 2008, showed 21 per cent of residents indicated they volunteer at a local school, while 17 per cent said they volunteer at a church and another 17 per cent indicated they volunteer for a not-for-profit group. Fifteen per cent of respondents reported volunteering at a service club or organization.

Each year residents are asked to recognize the selfless actions of friends, neighbors or relatives volunteering in some capacity to improve the life of another person or the community. The Volunteers of the Year Award acknowledges their outstanding contributions. Individuals and groups may be nominated in four categories:

1. **Leader of Tomorrow Award** – The Leader of Tomorrow Award recognizes a youth who have shown leadership in the City of Airdrie through his/her volunteer involvement.
2. **Ambassador Award** – This award is conferred to an Airdrie Citizen (proprietor) or a business entity that has made an outstanding contribution in promoting the City of Airdrie as a place for community and opportunity through volunteerism and philanthropy.
3. **Soul of Airdrie Award** – This award is conferred to an Airdrie citizen who has made an outstanding contribution as a volunteer in the fields of art and culture, athletics, social and community services, and/or governance. This individual demonstrates a passion for helping others become resilient contributing members of the community.
4. **Volunteer Advocate Award** – The Volunteer Advocate Award is conferred to a not-for-profit organization, a volunteer-comprised grassroots committee and/or a community group that has demonstrated community leadership by engaging citizens through volunteerism.

"We would like to honor these volunteers during National Volunteer Week as this week honors the people who donate their time and energy to their fellow citizens. It is also meant to raise awareness of our country's values," says Aragon.

Residents can nominate someone for the Volunteers of the Year Award by filling out an application available at City Hall (400 Main Street) or online at www.airdrie.ca. Nomination deadline is March 20, 2009. Residents of Airdrie aged 11 and up whose volunteer achievements have made a difference to the lives of the people in Airdrie are eligible for these awards. Previously nominated individuals may be nominated again. The Volunteers of the Year Award presentation will occur at the Volunteer Week Celebration on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at the Town and Country Centre, for more information visit www.airdrie.ca or call us at 948-8800, ext 457.

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