



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For release

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### **Conservation Halton recognizes local environmental champions at Conservation Awards of Excellence**

BURLINGTON – Conservation Halton (CH) held its 28th annual Conservation Awards of Excellence ceremony on June 3, 2010 at its Administration Centre in Burlington. The awards are presented to people and organizations that make outstanding contributions to conservation in the Halton watershed which includes Halton, Peel, Hamilton and Puslinch.

The 2010 award recipients are as follows:

- **Citizen Award**  
Mark Alford (Milton)
- **Community Award**  
Burlington Community Foundation, Burlington BlueCreeks Project
- **Corporate Award**  
Johnson Controls (Milton),  
Town of Halton Hills
- **Education Award**  
Club Green, Christ the King CSS (Georgetown),  
St. Marguerite d'Youville Catholic Elementary School (Oakville),  
White Oaks Secondary School (Oakville)
- **Parks Volunteer**  
Dave Radley (Campbellville)
- **Stewardship Award**  
Nathan Helder, Gelderman Landscaping (Flamborough)

More details on the recipients and their accomplishments can be found below. Nearly 100 guests and dignitaries attended the awards ceremony, which also included a presentation by the Mountsberg Raptor Centre.

Congratulating all of the evening's winners, Conservation Halton Chair Brian Penman said, "The Conservation Halton Awards of Excellence are a wonderful opportunity to recognize all of the good things that people and groups have been doing to protect the natural environment of our watershed. Once again this year we have a group of very worthy, and diverse recipients, who demonstrate that anyone of us can be an environmental champion, and that all acts be they large or small, can make a difference."

### **2010 Conservation Halton Awards of Excellence Recipients**

#### **Citizen Award**

#### **Mark Alford**

For the past 25 years, Mark has created a citizen group of 120 people to protect the Limestone Creek, a cold water fishery, against any hazards, which had included spills from an adjoining mushroom factory's lagoon. Mark worked with Conservation Halton, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Ministry of the Environment, allowing these groups on his property to annually assess the health of the stream, determine the species present, and monitor for any invasive species. Mark would also assist these groups with monitoring. He was previously recognized by the Ministry of Natural Resources for creek rehabilitation work on Limestone Creek. Mark is a committed steward who has cared for a stream that runs through his property – he has a love of nature and a concern for its health and well being.

#### **Community Award**

#### **Burlington Community Foundation**

The Burlington Community Foundation (BCF) is the community catalyst behind the development of the Burlington BlueCreeks Project – a partnership between Burlington's leading environmental groups to enhance the health of Grindstone Creek. Starting in 2009 the BCF engaged local environmental organizations in developing a single, large scale environmental project to benefit the City of Burlington. The BCF, in collaboration with the Conservation Halton Foundation, Conservation Halton, Bay Area Restoration Council, Royal Botanical Gardens, and the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship program, devised the Burlington BlueCreeks Project to enhance the health of Grindstone Creek. Activities were focused on creek cleanups, water quality monitoring, riparian zone enhancement, removal of non-native invasive species, researching key indicator species and community awareness.

*Burlington Community Foundation (continued)* Since September, 2009, Burlington BlueCreeks projects have helped remove 50 tires, 20 bags of trash and one wading pool from Grindstone Creek; removed invasive species from the area equal to four football fields adjacent to the creek; planted 200 native shrubs and trees; tracked endangered turtles; improved salmon spawning areas in the creek where 200 spawning nests were found, and cleaned up 2500 metres of shoreline.

### **Corporate Award**

#### **Johnson Controls**

**Johnson Controls** - Sandra Penman, from Johnson Controls, has organized a group of her colleagues, to pick up litter at the Kelso Conservation Area for their company's Environmental Day. As a result of their efforts, Johnson Controls donated \$1,000.00 to Kelso for the purchase of recycling/litter receptacles. These units are now in place in the park to further encourage recycling and litter control. The units also contribute to the visual enhancement of the park.

#### **Town of Halton Hills**

**Mayor Rick Bonnette, Town of Halton Hills** - Mayor Rick Bonnette took steps in 2007 to recognize the importance of keeping the environment first. A Mayor's Task Force made up of community and town staff was created. They took a practical, affordable, reasonable, enforceable, and educational approach to preserve, protect and enhance our environment. The Green Plan was created, which is a book of 70 council endorsed recommendations focussing on energy conservation, environmental, social, economic, and cultural initiatives recognizing the importance of sustainability of the community. The Town has implemented many Green Plan initiatives – Earth Hour with energy reductions of 13.9 in 2009 and 9 per cent in 2010; Count Me In Challenge; Halton Region's rain barrel sales with over 1,300 barrels sold at two events; participated in and endorsed the Halton Children's Water Festival. Mayor Bonnette understands the importance of the environment, utilizing a sensible approach that is easily implemented to make a change for the better in our community.

### **Education Award**

#### **Club Green, Christ the King Catholic Secondary School**

**Club Green, Christ the King Catholic Secondary School** - Over this past year, Club Green has had a major focus on Biodiversity. They assisted in planning and running a youth conference with biodiversity as the theme and had students from local schools attend. The students participated in workshops, themed in biodiversity, throughout the day and even played a game that was designed by one of the students. Students established species of the day presentations which highlighted the threats to specific species indigenous to Ontario. This is the second time Christ the King CSS has received a Conservation Halton Award of Excellence.

### **St. Marguerite d'Youville Catholic Elementary School**

**St. Marguerite d'Youville Catholic Elementary School** - St. Marguerite d'Youville school went from a school with a small green focus to a "going green" aspiration in one year. Teacher Nina Torok was instrumental in anti-idling campaigns where all vehicles at the school were encouraged to turn off their engines and preserve air quality; moving towards a paperless school; using compostable paper products for Pancake Tuesday; using green carts; collecting pounds and pounds of recyclables that school families transported to the appropriate disposal sites – all these, just to name a few.

### **Futures Program, White Oaks Secondary School**

**Futures Program, White Oaks Secondary School** - A unique program for high school students with developmental, intellectual and physical exceptionalities, the Futures Program encourages academics, life skills development and community participation. Futures Program students have developed a comprehensive school recycling program 'iRecycle' which they support through life skills, learning and outreach opportunities. In 2007, Futures Program students and staff were quick to take up the challenge of managing the waste generated within the Program and the White Oaks Secondary School north campus. In the summer of 2008, organizers approached the Futures Program to participate in the Halton Children's Water Festival. They acted as Water and Waste Champions during the entire Festival helping attendees to safely use the drinking water dispensers and properly sort their waste into Blue Box, GreenCart and garbage. Futures Program students attended one Festival activity per day learning the importance of water conservation. Twelve Futures Program students volunteered as Water and Waste Champions during the four days at the 2009 Halton Children's Water Festival. Students also participated in educational water activities gaining important knowledge about water conservation.

### **Parks Volunteer**

### **Dave Radley**

David Radley approached Mountsberg Raptor Centre staff about volunteering in December 2008. He quickly mastered the usual cleaning and feeding duties and became known as an exceptionally reliable volunteer. Dave also noticed bigger needs used his extensive skills to help improve the Raptor Centre in ways not previously thought possible. His projects include, but are not limited to: refurbishing bird enclosures, designing and constructing new winter housing for temperature sensitive birds, as well as design and construction of information kiosks. He has also contributed in other areas of the park, helping to create new rabbit pens in the barn. Dave's matter-of-fact "We Can Do This" attitude has had a positive effect on staff morale, and makes him a joy to have as a volunteer. Dave is an active communicator and innovator who has contributed to the overall growth of the Raptor Centre in an unprecedented way. Dave's dedication as a volunteer motivates everyone to work harder to improve the quality of our site, the care of our birds, and, most importantly, the visitor's experience.

### **Stewardship Award**

### **Nathan Helder, Gelderman Landscaping**

When they purchased the property in 2007, the home owners were unaware that the property contained a natural wetland adjacent to the Lake Medad Valley Swamp and Grindstone Creek Watershed (provincially significant). Some of Mr. Helder's achievements include: removal of a mulch pile that was within wetland jurisdiction; planting of native shrubs and grass seed, including bulrushes, to encourage natural erosion control; placed a rock boulder wall to define the boundary and prevent physical and human damage to wetland; two wood duck nest boxes can be found on the property promoting wildlife. To raise awareness Mr. Helder will be erecting signage on property visible to public to celebrate partnership between Conservation Halton and Gelderman Landscaping. More recently, Nathan Helder received the "green award" from Flamborough Chamber of Commerce.

### **Hamilton Halton Watershed Stewardship Program Participants**

Since 1994, staff of the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program has been contacting landowners of natural areas and watercourses and sharing information about their individual roles in the protection and enhancement of these natural features. The Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program is a partnership between Hamilton Conservation Authority and Conservation Halton. Our local watersheds are rich with forests, wetlands, meadows and streams, many owned by landowners like the ones we are recognizing tonight.

This year's award recipients are members of a group of over 329 award recipients. These landowners have made a commitment that protects over 2,800 hectares of natural area and over 130 kilometres of stream.

- Peter Hurrell and Dianne Wojcik
- City of Burlington - Hidden Valley Park
- Donna Broome
- Urmas Soomet and Barbara Kerr

### **Stream of Dreams Program Participants**

The final awards were presented to eight participants of the **Stream of Dreams** watershed awareness program that combines community art by way of a colourful outdoor mural of wooden fish cut outs while learning about the value of local creeks. The groups and schools recognized were:

- City of Burlington 2009 Children's Festival
- Chris Hadfield Public School (Milton)
- E.C. Drury Provincial School (Milton)
- E.W. Foster Public School (Milton)

*Stream of Dreams recipients (continued)*

- Joshua Creek Public School (Oakville)
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School (Carlisle)
- Pineview Public School (Halton Hills)
- St. Andrew Catholic Elementary School (Oakville)

The award recipients received certificates of appreciation from CH and their names were placed on a plaque prominently displayed in the lobby of Conservation Halton's Administration Centre.

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*Conservation Halton is the community based environmental agency that protects, restores and manages the natural resources in its watershed. The organization has staff that includes ecologists, land use planners, engineers, foresters and educators along with a network of volunteers who are guided by a Board of Directors comprised of municipally elected and appointed citizens. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science based programs and services.*

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**Note to Editors:** For more information about these and other awards, including descriptions of award winning projects and recipients, and photographs, please contact Hassaan Basit or Norm Miller at Conservation Halton.