

Celebrating
Seniors



Awards

Award Recipients



◀ **Education**
Award Recipient:
Gordon Li



◀ **Contributions to a Rural Community**
Award Recipient:
Gilbert R. McConnell



▶ **Teamwork**
Award Recipient: Churchbridge
Volunteer Campground Committee



▶ **Advocacy**
Award Recipient: Florence Graham



▶ **Centennarian**
Award Recipient: Ellen Manton



▶ **Heritage**
Award Recipient: Margaret Beach



Community Leadership
Award Recipient: Dick Strayer



Lifetime Achievement (Urban)
Award Recipient:
Wally Coates



Lifetime Achievement (Rural)
Award Recipient:
Mae Wesley

Fine Arts
Award Recipient:
Angie Wollbaum
and Evelyn Dahl
(photo not available)

Fitness and Healthy Lifestyle
Award Recipient: Thelma Snow
(photo not available)

What goes around

It's no surprise that Saskatchewan, with its history of neighbourliness and innovation, should lead the nation in volunteering.

The 2007 Canada survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participation showed that almost 60 per cent of the people in our province devote some of their time to helping others. According to the survey, our province has the highest rate of volunteers in the nation. Fifty-nine per cent of our population donate their time to helping others, compared to the national average of 45 per cent.

And, it's also no surprise that many volunteers are those who have already made a lifetime of giving of themselves. The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, an umbrella group for provincial seniors' organizations, recently presented the Celebrating Seniors Volunteer Awards to acknowledge the efforts of our older residents who have made a lifetime of donating their time and expertise.

Volunteers are the backbones of our communities, and nowhere is that more true than in rural Saskatchewan. In Dinsmore, Gilbert McConnell is known for helping out his neighbours and the community at large. Gib, as he's known, is active in his church community, the seniors' Gaiety Group, the Kinsmen, the Dinsmore Housing Authority, and the Seniors Girls' softball team. He also volunteers at the Dinsmore Memorial Arena and drives people to medical appointments. Singing is his passion — in the church choir and as part of the Welcome Val-

ley singing group who visit and entertain at nursing homes and at other events. His overall contribution to the community was recognized in the presentation of the Contribution to a Rural Community category, which is awarded to a senior who regularly participates in establishing and supporting activities in rural Saskatchewan. McConnell could not be reached for an interview.

The enthusiasm of volunteers is evident in the words and actions of Mae Wesley of Fort Qu'Appelle, who took home the Lifetime Achievement Award for the senior whose volunteering spirit and dedication throughout their lifetime has improved society and inspired others.

Wesley has been involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a self-directed development program for young people age 14 to 25, since 1973. In 1981, she formed the current Edgeley Yough Group, based on the requirements of the Award program. Among her numerous activities in the communities, she organized and managed the Edgeley Jazz Band and Jazz Vocal Choir, and remains active in her church and the local Lions Club.

She is reticent about discussing her award, pointing out that many people contribute to their communi-

ties. "It's definitely an honour, but there are a lot of people who deserve the same thing," she says. Wesley has been working with young people for 50 years. "My work with the youth of all ages has been very satisfying," she says. She looks back on her lifetime of volunteering with fondness. "I have many, many good memories. I've really been blessed with with all the wonderful, wonderful friends I've made," she says.

It is we who are blessed with the presence of McConnell, Wesley and all the other volunteers, like Saskatoon's Ellen Manton. "I just do it without thinking. I like helping people," says the winner of the Seniors' Mechanism Centennarian award for the senior age 90 or over who continues to be an active volunteer.

Manton has been invaluable to the Saskatoon Branch of the Century Club and has also been

actively involved in her church for many years. Trained as a Certified Leader in the "In Motion" exercise program, Manton is active in this and other volunteer activities at McClure Place, where she has resided since the seniors' facility opened in 1989.

She says her volunteering does more than help others. "I always say it's prolonged my life. I'm not the kind to just sit around," says the active 95-year-old. And, Manton has some words of advice to all the rest of us — young or old — whether we volunteer or not. "The world goes around," she says, "so you better go around with it." A heartfelt thank you to Manton and all the others who keep our world moving around; who knows where we'd be without them.



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