

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Debra Arnott**

**City:** Cache Creek

### **Achievements:**

For more than 40 years, Debra Arnott has dedicated her life, both personally and professionally, to ensuring that rural communities in B.C. have the support they need to thrive, particularly during times of crisis and economic upheaval. As the former manager of Community Futures Sun Country, she fought tirelessly on behalf of small businesses and communities that were impacted by the devastating wildfires in 2017 and 2018, and the fire that destroyed the Village of Lytton in 2021. In her efforts, Deb did whatever it took to find the resources needed to help those communities.

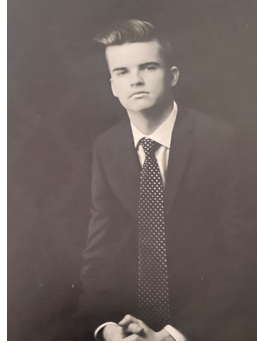
When Deb and her husband were being evacuated from their home during the Elephant Hill wildfire in 2017, she was on the phone, making sure that friends, neighbours, clients and colleagues were safe and calling on government agencies for help. She recruited two of her colleagues and hit the road, driving to Vancouver to meet face-to-face with key stakeholders. Her passion and persistence resulted in more disaster relief for small businesses devastated by the wildfires.

This is just one of dozens of instances where Deb has gone above and beyond the call of duty to make sure the communities in her region are well-served. Deb has also stepped in to ensure the annual Christmas Parade through downtown Ashcroft went ahead after losing its longtime organizer. She volunteered to develop the McAbee Fossil Beds in collaboration with Bonaparte First Nations and Heritage B.C., as an Indigenous destination site after it was closed to the public. And when her town's only medical clinic was in danger of closing, Deb rolled up her sleeves and took the lead in helping to refurbish the clinic and keep its doors open.

Having grown up in Cache Creek, Deb understands that many small rural communities lack the resources and services found in larger, more populated centres. In addition to managing the Community Futures office that supports businesses throughout the Central Interior of B.C., Deb has volunteered for several non-profit organizations and societies, including the Regional Literacy Group, Thompson Rivers University, the historic Hat Creek Ranch, the McAbee Fossil Beds, Thompson View Manor and the District Health Care Auxiliary. Additionally, Deb served as a member of the B.C. Rural Advisory Council, which provides input on government policies for rural communities.

Deb immediately impresses with her energy, enthusiasm and passion. She inspires others to do more to support rural communities and businesses. Her willingness to step in during difficult times and her unrelenting service to not only her community, but her region, province and nation, was recognized with the B.C. Achievement Community Award in 2011 and makes her a recipient of this year's BC Medal of Good Citizenship.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Landon Douglas Brown**

**City:** North Vancouver

### **Achievements:**

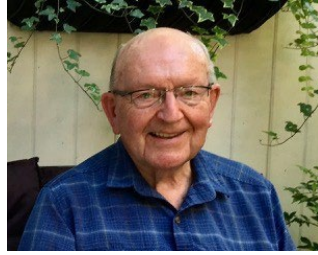
Landon Brown is the co-founder of Bear and Landon's toy and tablet drive for the kids being treated at BC Children's Hospital. For the past two years, Landon, along with last year's Medal of Good Citizenship recipient, Jonathan "Bear" Yeung, have led successful toy and tablet drives that gathered thousands of new toys and hundreds of new electronic tablets. These toys and tablets boost the morale of children receiving treatment and help keep them connected with their loved ones especially during the strict COVID-19 protocols. The items help alleviate some of the boredom the kids face as they bravely endure treatments at the hospital for critical injuries, cancer, and other serious diseases.

Over the past two years, Landon has worked hard, using his free time to send out countless emails and make calls. Landon has taken part in toy drives around the Lower Mainland and even soldiered on in terrible weather conditions, because he knows sickness doesn't take holidays, and wants as many kids as possible to know they were cared for.

Through his efforts, sense of purpose and perseverance, Landon has inspired people of all ages as well as leaders of some of the world's largest companies. His service has garnered the respect of Canadian Tire, the Dilawri Group, Lego and Bell that have joined forces with him.

2023 will mark the third toy drive, which has grown steadily since its inception. At only 20 years old, all that Landon has and continues to accomplish through this toy drive, is as remarkable as it is admirable.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Bob Burrows**

**City:** Vancouver

### **Achievements:**

Bob Burrows is the founder of The Dugout, a small drop-in centre in Gastown which he and three other clergymen (Anglican, Roman Catholic and Central City Mission) started in 1967. Bob is an exceptional candidate for public recognition for his outstanding service to the people of B.C.

Bob is known for his unbroken dedication and his vision for the guests of The Dugout. No matter how disadvantaged or underprivileged - all guests are welcomed at The Dugout. After being active for 55 years in the Downtown Eastside, The Dugout is a well-known institution; however, very few know about the role of its founder, Bob Burrows.

Bob's initiative in establishing The Dugout illustrates his understanding and passion for the needs of people living on the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. It also shows his personal commitment to these people that has sustained The Dugout to this day.

The Dugout has always been non-religious, non-exclusionary and non-judgmental. It was named after the dugouts which were part of the trenches of the First World War. These dugouts were places of refuge and some nourishment before heading back to battle. Likewise, The Dugout is a place of refuge for those living on the streets of Vancouver, offering a safe community space with free coffee and baked goods.

Bob has led a life of helping people in need. Before coming to First United Church, he was captain of a mission boat based at Ocean Falls and pilot of a float plane at Alert Bay, reaching out to isolated communities and indigenous villages in these years. Since officially retiring, he has authored two books on the missionary services of the United Church and devoted countless hours to The Dugout, becoming a great friend to residents of the Downtown Eastside.

Bob has been successful at keeping the services of The Dugout going both in its early years and again in recent years. His generous personality and the relationships he has formed, mean that people are never afraid to ask for support. Through The Dugout, Bob focuses on creating a safe, and welcoming place where people can overcome isolation and loneliness. It's very important to Bob that The Dugout accepts everyone regardless of challenges like mental health and substance use. Most workers and volunteers at The Dugout are from the Downtown Eastside and take pride in helping out as they are able. This visionary insight of Bob's is one of the reasons The Dugout is as important today as it was 55 years ago.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Rachel Dong**

**City:** Vancouver

### **Achievements:**

Rachel Dong is an environmental leader who has inspired hundreds of youth across Metro Vancouver. She has been involved with the Vancouver School Board Sustainability Conference since Grade 9, where she empowers youth with the knowledge and skills needed to enact sustainable change. As chair, Rachel leads a team of 30 students from across the district who share her goal of raising environmental awareness and fostering the next generation of climate advocates.

During the pandemic, Rachel continued to create opportunities for her peers to learn about important community issues. Through resilience and innovation, she hosted seven online mentor sessions and two full-day conferences that connected 1,000 secondary school students from across the province. Her team provided the opportunity to engage in action-oriented workshops, networking sessions, and meaningful dialogue. Rachel continues to advance sustainability at school and in the larger community through various service projects.

Rachel has also been working diligently to reduce the environmental impacts of food waste. As club president of Kitchen-on-a-Mission at Eric Hamber Secondary, she coordinated an end-of-day food program by developing partnerships with bakeries and homeless shelters across Vancouver. Rachel mobilized a team of 50 volunteers to collect surplus goods to donate to people in need. Since 2019, her club has provided more than \$35,000 in food to support at-risk communities in the Downtown Eastside.

As a child, Rachel experienced gender bias as the only female in her science class. This inspired her to start a non-profit, the Eureka Foundation, to promote diversity in STEM. Rachel successfully applied for \$3,500 in grant funding and collaborated with secondary school volunteers to design and deliver free STEM camps for underprivileged youth. Throughout the year, her team has built an inclusive community that empowered over 70 children to break down barriers in STEM. Rachel Dong is a role model who consistently demonstrates exceptional leadership skills in supporting others as they strive for personal and professional growth. As a mentor to others, she cultivates active, engaged leaders who are motivated to positively impact their community.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Barry English**

**City:** Terrace

### **Achievements:**

Barry English is an outstanding member of his northern community of Terrace. His dedication and kindness impact far reaching communities. As a volunteer of the Northern Animal Rescue Alliance (NARA) his contributions are simply invaluable.

To support fundraising goals, Barry converted his garage into a recycling depot so community members could drop off returnable recycling 24-hours a day. He drives over the area collecting returnables from those unable to deliver and single-handedly sorts them all and cashes them in. In the last four years he has raised \$79,413.75. Every cent goes to NARA. That's more than 1.5 million bottles and cans collected! It's a very unpleasant job as the cans are usually unwashed and often contaminated, but he dons his PPE and gets on with it in all weather, never complaining.

On top of this, Barry fosters the oldest, unwanted dogs. He loves them like they are his own and often goes on to adopt them. He has a heart of gold, and the animals seem to understand and take comfort in this.

In addition to his involvement with NARA, Barry volunteers as a community snow angel. Terrace has huge snowfalls and Barry is well known for leaving early to clear driveways for seniors and people with physical challenges.

Barry recently retired from the Terrace Pipes and Drums Society after 40 years of teaching youngsters how to play and perform in a marching band. He takes great pride in watching his students thrive as they participate at important ceremonies in his small, diverse and geographically spread-out community.

Lately, Barry has undergone surgery for a life-threatening illness and yet continues to volunteer up to 10 hours a day, seven days a week to mentor children, help the lives of companion animals in critical need, and support community members facing hardships. In the last five years he has single-handedly raised \$125,000 and continues to care for the elderly unwanted animals needing a loving home.

Barry received the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers in 2016. For all his contributions, he is considered a genuine asset to Terrace, the Northwest and British Columbia.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Shannon Fisher**

**City:** Cranbrook

### **Achievements:**

Shannon Fisher is an entrepreneur and a humanitarian who achieved her success while taking care of her staff and her community. Shannon is a member of Canada Nurseryland, a group of independently owned and operated garden centres in the agricultural industry that provide essential products and services to their local communities.

Shannon is an inspiring business leader. There are many incidences where Shannon has gone beyond the norm. She has lent money to staff can pay vet bills, so they can avoid interest charges. She has made available company equipment so staff can help elderly neighbours. And Shannon has offered jobs to people who desperately needed them, even if she didn't have work available.

Beyond this, Shannon is a model for the way that she cares for her seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico. Most of her workers have been returning to the Top Crop Farm for several years. Shannon pays them more than minimum wage, provides a home with full amenities, a truck to use, and takes them to local events to experience the community while they are in Canada.

There are also numerous examples of Shannon's support for local farmers and gardeners at the expense of her own business. This includes committing to a whole semi-load of hay during the severe shortage in 2021, then selling it at cost. She has also spent hours to mitigate price increases so local people could grow their own food and feed their animals more easily, especially during COVID-19. As well, Shannon is always the first local business owner to lend out her trailers and trucks to help those who may need to move livestock due to wildfires.

Shannon has built up a strong social media presence on Facebook, which she uses to promote other local businesses and events that enrich the community. Some examples include the annual Rotary Turkey Drive; Christmas gifts for seniors; and fundraisers for local animal rescues. Shannon has personally driven orphaned black bears up to Golden. If it's the right thing to do for the community, Shannon is involved.

And most recently, to address homelessness in Cranbrook, Shannon has mobilized the business community and secured more resources to help protect local RCMP officers and keep everyone in the community safe. Shannon's valuable services have benefited the lives of both people and animals, while inspiring hundreds in the East Kootenay region.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Karen Hira**

**City:** Victoria

### **Achievements:**

Karen Hira is a young woman raised by a single parent on long-term disability due to a traumatic brain injury that left her mom with significant cognitive challenges. Karen's mom was supported by Karen's grandparents and aunt and uncle who helped raise her and her older sister. At 16, Karen moved out of her grandparents' home to escape childhood trauma and in search of independence. She was cut-off from the family as a result. Since then, Karen has financially supported herself and her mother as well as covered expenses related to her educational goals by maintaining multiple jobs.

Karen's education and employment reflects her commitment to bettering lives in communities that have been racialized and marginalized. In 2015, Karen completed a bachelor of social work degree with distinction at the University of Victoria, went on to complete a master of public administration degree in 2018, and currently, a PhD in Public Administration.

After obtaining her B.A., Karen was a case worker for newcomer women fleeing domestic violence at the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) for several years. She then continued to support the organization through grant acquisitions as she worked as a policy, audit, and research analyst – all while completing her master's. Her efforts resulted in more than \$4 million in provincial and federal support for VIRCS newcomers' programs and funding to open the first trauma-informed daycare in Canada. At the Victoria Police Department, Karen leveraged her knowledge of, and experience working with newcomers to strengthen relationships between police and newcomer communities.

Three years ago, Karen became the executive director of the Oasis Society, a non-profit organization serving Indigenous adults experiencing multi-generational trauma. Oasis was on the brink of closure due to the pandemic and high staff turnover rates. Karen stabilized the organization by securing a record amount of funding that ensured the sustainability of health, cultural, wellness and spiritual wellness programs. These programs are integral to Indigenous peoples in Victoria as Oasis is the only organization providing these services. In September 2021, Karen was hired as the executive director of VIRCS, and again stabilized an organization quickly crumbling from poor leadership and the weight of the pandemic. Karen rebranded the organization and supported the agency to double its organizational revenue, increasing staff by 35 per cent, replacing old and outdated organizational policy, and securing funding to complete an IT infrastructure renewal project. Her connections with Indigenous communities and academia have fostered innovative opportunities for collaboration. These accomplishments are remarkable considering Karen is completing her PhD, supporting University of Victoria as a graduate research assistant, and as a sessional instructor, and still acting as executive director of the Oasis Society.



## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipients



**Guul Jiit Jaad**

**City:** Vancouver

### **Achievements:**

Guul Jiit Jaad (*Gul-Jeet-Jahd*) is a long-time Downtown Eastside (DTES) resident, artist and activist. She is a passionate advocate who rallies against the discrimination, abuse, sexual assault, human trafficking and exploitation of Indigenous women and girls. Guul Jiit Jaad was an integral part of initiating the Women's Memorial March in 1992, now held annually on February 14. This grassroots event honours and remembers the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous woman and girls. Thanks to her dedication to keeping the memories and legacies of these women alive, the event now draws thousands of marchers every year.

She also co-founded Walk4Justice in 2006, an organization that creates awareness about the escalating violence toward Indigenous women and girls and gives a voice to their families. The organization brought national awareness to the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls all across Canada, with a particular focus on the often forgotten Highway of Tears and Vancouver's DTES. The organizers and volunteers have walked across Canada calling for action on seven occasions so far, and have walked from Vancouver to Prince Rupert three times, calling specific attention to the Highway of Tears. One of the most significant projects that Guul Jiit Jaad created while mentoring nine women from the DTES was the Survival Pole, which was unveiled in 2016 at Pigeon Park. The pole represents survival and healing from social and racial injustice and symbolized the community's struggle for survival and inclusion. It has become a symbol of unity to bring all cultures together.

Additionally, Guul Jiit Jaad is well known in the community at a local level for giving back to others. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Guul Jiit Jaad has led a team of volunteers, making home cooked meals to feed people who are homeless in the DTES. Guul Jiit Jaad and her team are known as the Moccasin Mafia that provide food for hundreds of people a night or 6000 meals a month for those living in the DTES and surrounding areas. Since March 2020, when the DTES community and surrounding areas were being devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with current housing, gender-based violence and overdose crises, Guul Jiit Jaad committed her life's work to frontline service, searching for missing family members throughout the DTES and lower mainland.

Guul Jiit Jaad persists in the fight to bring an end to the ongoing suffering and effects of colonization, patriarchy, misogyny, gender-based violence, exploitation, Missing and Murdered Indigenous women, and the ongoing intentional genocide of Indigenous people. Her involvement has had a profound impact on people beyond just the DTES, spanning across B.C. and Canada. Her passion for helping women and girls and her determination to lift them up, to support them in living their lives without fear of violence, is done without expectation of recognition. She is a Haida warrior who fights with all her heart. We need to see more people like her, whose leadership is selfless and exemplifies the meaning of paying it forward to those who have been left behind, silenced and unloved, but are never forgotten.



## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Andrei Marti**

**City:** Saanichton

### **Achievements:**

In 2018, when he was only nine, Andrei Marti received the National Philanthropy Day for Youth in Philanthropy award, age 5-11, for the second time. Andrei's accomplishment is certainly noteworthy. He is raising thousands of dollars as a City of Victoria busker by turning handstands at the rate of a dollar per minute for tourists on Government Street. His mission is to raise awareness about Type One Diabetes and raise funds for local children's charities: Help Fill A Dream Foundation and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF).

Never to miss an opportunity, Andrei spoke comfortably during his acceptance speech, using a metaphor to issue a fundraising challenge. His engaging words sparked an invitation for his participation in the Power of Youth: Giving Hearts Workshop, which is aimed at inspiring youth and philanthropy. In 2019, at this event, Andrei inspired 220 of his peers at the Oak Bay Secondary School to donate the \$100 Canada Helps charitable gift card, which they had been given, towards one of the approximately 80,000 Canada Revenue Agency approved charities.

At such a young age, Andrei has already raised over \$50,000 for local charities that help children and youth. Each year Andrei challenges others to match \$500 to the charity of his choice, which is often Help Fill a Dream Foundation. Andrei gives freely of his time and talents, inspiring others, as he fundraises.

Turning handstands is not the only arrow that Andrei has in his fundraising quiver. Andrei has an incredible can-do attitude. He also collects bottles, creates crafts and goods to sell, and speaks to youth and adults. With all that he does, it's easy to imagine Andrei achieving his dream of raising a ton of money to improve the quality of life for others.

In 2022, he was selected as a JDRF youth ambassador to fly to Ottawa and attend meetings with Members of Parliament to help educate and advocate for more funding towards both research and making technology and support more accessible to all Type One diabetics.

That same year, Andrei inspired the underwriter of an annual bursary award at Camosun College. Each year, the "Inspiring Community Leadership Award" is given in the recipient's own name and presented to a Camosun College student to assist with the cost of post-secondary schooling. The BC Medal of Good Citizenship is a befitting honour for Andrei who gives so freely of his time and talents, inspiring others.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Ron Rice**

**City:** Victoria

### **Achievements:**

Ron Rice is a dedicated Indigenous community leader, volunteer and board chair, exemplifying good citizenship and a commitment to delivering to those in need. He is a role model, innovative and makes a huge difference, especially for underserved urban Indigenous peoples.

Ron has been the executive director of the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) for the past five years, after serving as volunteer board chair for 14 years. During his time as chair, the centre went from an organization recovering from deep debt, to one with an operating budget of \$8 million with three buildings for affordable housing. As the board chair, this took grit, hard work, a certain amount of risk-taking with a strong belief in the core values of the organization and the community. During his tenure the centre's budget and staff have grown annually by 30 per cent. Ron was determined to expand funding sources to include the private sector, beyond cyclical government funding. His vision has been realized as now 25 per cent of all funds for urban Indigenous programming are from private sources. This is a first for the VNFC.

While leading the charge at the VNFC, Ron served on the board of the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, the Raven Investment Impact Foundation and at Camosun College for six years during a time of great expansion for the college. Now he is on the board of Island Health, overseeing a budget of \$3.1 billion, expanding health services for Indigenous peoples, and changing the culture of racial discrimination that has plagued the health care system by holding a seat on the provincial In Plain Sight Task Team. Ron provides the selfless, steady, Indigenous leadership and insight that has been missing.

In his spare time, Ron organizes the Back-to-School picnic provincewide. Children and families look forward to the annual picnic, which pre-COVID, delivered school supplies to 3,500 Indigenous children in 11 B.C. communities. Ron raises the funds for the supplies, the food, and the games. Then the circus goes on the road with Ron at the wheel of the rental truck. Hundreds of volunteers are needed for this fun day. Everyone is happy to be involved and to see underserved children thrilled with their backpacks. What started out as a poverty relief program to provide school supplies to underserved urban Indigenous families, has become a way of looking at going back to school differently. The picnic has changed how elders view school, helping to heal the pain of the past and breaking the cycle of trauma experienced at residential schools. It is true reconciliation.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Winston Sayson**

**City:** Richmond

### **Achievements:**

Winston Sayson, K.C., is a distinguished Filipino-Chinese Canadian who personifies the Medal of Good Citizenship virtues as demonstrated through his three-decade long legal career, steadfast service to victims of crime, dedication to the rule of law, and volunteer work.

As a teen, Winston immigrated to B.C. from the Philippines. His strong work ethic and street smarts made him the successful lawyer and community leader he is today. Winston, now retired, was an exceptional criminal barrister whose trials were prosecuted to the highest standards. Winston recognized that victims of crime frequently come from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds with many intersectional vulnerabilities. He understood how testifying could re-traumatize victims and was always able to communicate effectively with witnesses and victims to give them the strength and resiliency to take the stand. He was a pioneer in combining wellness practices with legal work and taught lawyers trauma-informed practices to minimize re-traumatization. He worked many hours above and beyond his normal workday to ensure victims were well supported.

For over three decades, Winston's work dealt with violence which, included cases of vehicular homicide, domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. This took a toll on him. He experienced PTSD, anxiety and secondary trauma resulting from the nature of his work and the threats he received, yet he was always courageous. As Winston healed, he shared his experience, teaching lawyers, criminology students, and victims about self-care and resilience. He's an advocate for bringing mental wellness to the forefront in the legal profession. While a full-time Crown Counsel, he successfully studied to be a counsellor and mentor.

Winston's outlook is similar in his personal life. He is a consummate helper for families and children at his church and community. Winston's dedication and valuable service to his community has been recognized. He is the recipient of the following awards that speak to the wide breadth of his impact. They include, but are not limited to:

- Police Victim Services Criminal Justice System Leadership Award (2010)
- Recognizing Excellence Award, BC Prosecution Service (2014)
- Vision Award, International Association of Forensic Nursing, for assisting the advancement of Forensic Nursing (2015)
- Leadership Award, BC Prosecution Service (2018)
- Award of Excellence, Surrey Women's Centre (2019)
- Lawyer of Distinction, BC Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers (2019)
- Distinguished Alumni Award, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (2022)

Winston has the honour of being named a Queen's Counsel in 2011 for exceptional merit and contribution to the legal profession. At the time, Winston was the only Filipino-Canadian Crown Counsel in the province. The influence he has had on his community is immeasurable. One example includes taking another Filipino-Canadian under his wing to mentor. Winston understood the inequities in the legal culture, and his mentorship not only made the individual a better lawyer, but instilled a hope that all lawyers could be a strong voice for justice and make a positive difference in the lives of British Columbians.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Rishika Selvakumar**

**City:** Richmond

### **Achievements:**

As a youth, Rishika Selvakumar gives others hope for a better world in the future. She is an avid member in the community and commits to everything she does. She's a changemaker, exemplifying the importance of taking initiative and leadership.

At the young age of 20, Rishika has accomplished and supported the community in multiple ways. Seeing a lack of mental health and wellness resources, Rishika founded the first Mental Health Club at her high school, Little Flower Academy while still in grade 10. After high school, she continued in mental health advocacy by starting The Wellness Proposal. This virtual campaign was hosted by UBC students and aimed to create a positive mental health environment through many projects, including youth-run events and mentorship programs that served nearly 40 undergraduate students.

Beyond this, Rishika supports mental health de-stigmatization by increasing access and awareness of available mental health supports for youth, adults, and seniors as a Youth Network Lead at Anxiety Canada, as a Youth Advisor and Scholarship Panelist for CMHA-BC, and as a Co-Facilitator and Communications Volunteer for CMHA-VF.

Rishika is a passionate advocate and a force for positive change. While pursuing a Bachelor of Science from UBC between 2019 to 2022, Rishika volunteered with World Vision UBC and Right to Play UBC, worked to support undergraduate students as an Advisor and Teaching Assistant, and highlighted the Sustainable Development Goals as a Campus Director for the first UBC Chapter of the United Nations' Millennium Fellowship program. Within her community of Richmond, Rishika has supported fundraising initiatives and celebrated cultural events as a Bharatanatyam dancer for over 15 years. Previously, she has volunteered to support immigrant families with the Family Services of Greater Vancouver in Richmond. She has endeavoured to de-stigmatize poverty during COVID-19 by organizing educational panels and donation drives with Ignite the Warmth Society, and as an Olympic Experience volunteer with the Richmond Olympic Oval to support youth volunteering and increase awareness of Olympic history for the public and tourists. Since COVID-19, Rishika has transitioned to volunteering for virtual projects with the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association to create educational resources that address accessibility concerns for those that are hard of hearing. As well, Rishika supports tutoring and volunteer recruitment with the Mentoring the Stars Foundation. Also, Rishika has acted as vice-president of the Acne Education Project to coordinate presentations around acne management and prevention to over 1500+ elementary school students in the Lower Mainland in 2022 alone. Within her career, Rishika continues to show her interest in the mental health field with her work to support program management for the Heartwood Centre for Women, a treatment facility for those struggling with substance use and mental health challenges.

For her efforts, Rishika has been awarded the Academic and Artistic Achievement Award from the Mihika Arts Foundation, U-ROC Outstanding Youth Teamwork Award from the City of Richmond, and the Shooting Star Award from Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives. Every organization she becomes involved with is driven by her enthusiasm to create change. Every person who meets her is astounded by the positivity and kindness in her heart.

Rishika's efforts to serve her community are moving and inspirational. She truly is a good citizen who refuses to stop even during COVID-19, instead connecting virtually to help anyone. When asked what motivates her, she simply says: it is what she is passionate about. She wants to make a difference in at least one person's life. She has more than succeeded. She has changed the lives of many people, creating a community wherever she goes.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Farhad (Fred) Soofi**

**City:** Port Moody

### **Achievements:**

Farhad (Fred) Soofi has earned the respect of his community. At an event, one can witness a bow wave ripple, marking his passage through a crowded room. People will turn, smile, laugh, and greet him with enthusiasm – and he will greet them back with the same friendliness, and genuine warmth, connecting with everyone he meets.

Fred has incredible passion for his community and all its members. Many people care for others based on status, wealth, close connection - not Fred. He has been a volunteer, organizer and active member of Amnesty International for the past 45 years, where he is a constant campaigner for the release of prisoners of conscience and human rights for all people, which is a testament to his commitment to inclusion and compassion.

Fred is a supporter of educational initiatives, both big and small. He is cooperating with organizations which provide educational scholarships for newcomers. He is also an integral part of everyday celebrations for local students. Through his restaurant, Fred contributes food to many community, school and sporting events and gift certificates for fundraisers.

Those small gestures may seem tiny in their individual effect, but cumulatively, over hundreds of contributions help build resources, supplies and better education for students and their families.

Fred is a sponsor of refugees from overseas, for example Turkey. When a mother with three children from war torn Ukraine arrived in June 2022, Fred provided accommodations for six months rent-free and utilities free of charge.

In 1998, as part of his incredible generosity, Fred donated a five-story office complex to support an independent living centre for adults with disabilities that depended on in-house services. The building made possible the creation of a loving, supportive community, that provided skill development, employment, and a rich social life coordinated by the centre.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Chantal Stefan**

**City:** Cumberland

### **Achievements:**

After witnessing a man searching in a garbage bin for food on a freezing Edmonton night, Chantal Stefan was so moved that she placed 88 homemade care packages of socks, mitts and sugar cookies in back alleys to be found by the homeless. She had no idea then that the project would one day grow into a not-for-profit organization with local, national, and even international impact. Since its inception in 2004, Chantal's Everybody Deserves a Smile project (EDAS) has brought holiday cheer to people experiencing homelessness.

In 2012, Chantal accepted a teaching contract at Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary in Courtney, bringing her passion for community activism to students and teachers at her school and the district, and creating the after-school EDAS Club for youth. EDAS is a heartfelt endeavour that takes an entire school community to organize, so Chantal created an extensive resource collection connecting project outcomes to the B.C. curriculum. Under Chantal's leadership, students study social justice issues, learn compassion and empathy, and become community advocates for marginalized people. They come face to face with individuals who have experienced homelessness and addiction, many of whom are eager to speak from experience about the importance of education, avoiding substance abuse and listening to one's elders.

Comox Valley support workers and program participants testify to the power of Chantal's work. In the moment that the care package passes from the hand of a teacher or student into the hand of a person experiencing hardship, there is a connection and a key moment of acknowledgement: You are seen. You are worthwhile. You are cared for. To date, Chantal has inspired schools and communities to paint, write, bake, write cheques and donate woolen wear to the tune of 23 000 holiday care packages for homeless shelters, soup kitchens, support agencies, and those living on our streets. Despite the challenges of connecting with the community during the pandemic, Chantal is leading EDAS clubs in delivering care packages to 1355 people this season, with 910 of those benefiting from shelters in the Comox Valley. Other packages will travel to shelters across Vancouver Island, and as far away as Montreal and London, England.

Chantal's project has received several awards for its impact on student learning and community advocacy: the British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Partnership Association Award, the Comox Valley Record Hero of the Year Award and a Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce Top 40 Under 40 Award.

The Everybody Deserves a Smile project shines holiday light into the lives of individuals experiencing terrible darkness, but above all it impresses upon students - more powerfully than almost any other experience in their school years - the importance of the choices they make today in setting a course for their future. For her tremendous efforts on behalf of both social justice education in the schools and community members experiencing hardship at Christmas time, Chantal Stefan is one of this year's recipients of the British Columbia Medal of Good Citizenship.

## 2022 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipient



**Jody Woodford**

**City:** Coalmont

### **Achievements:**

Jody Woodford supported the community as a volunteer firefighter for 10 years prior to becoming fire department chief in 2008.

Leading up to and during the horrific historical November 2021 flooding disaster, Jody provided heroic community support and leadership to people facing life threatening situations throughout the towns of Tulameen, Coalmont and three surrounding valleys. While under supreme personal pressure regarding her own home flooding, she focused on coordinating her crew and other volunteers, saving countless community members with numerous simultaneous land and water rescues.

Jody never left her post for several long weeks during the most active parts of the disaster, catching a few hours sleep at the hall when exhaustion took over. She led her crew and local residents, as well as directed teams that later arrived from other volunteer fire departments and SARS teams to support her tireless crew. With the fire hall receiving shocked and vulnerable flood victims, some rescued by boat, ATV or who fled by swimming through flood waters at night, she immediately initiated creative sourcing for life support (clothing, medical, food, shelter) to prevent further trauma to victims.

The full impact of the disaster is still being uncovered. Jody's unwavering compassion and commitment to these communities has her working long days, far outside her official fire department responsibilities, with all levels of government and relief agencies. Jody is involved in aiding overwhelmed residences isolated by road washouts, clear their homes, if salvageable, and helicopter in food, medicine, diapers, animal feed, clothing, and water; as well as coordinate well water testing to prevent potentially devastating community illnesses. Though her own house was flooded, as the immediate emergency eased, she selflessly helped a senior neighbour rebuild her home, before starting work to repair her own.

Jody's demonstration of passionate, effective caring has inspired her community to pull together and actively support each other through any crisis, whether flood or fire. Jody is a dedicated, visionary community role model. She is considered by those who know her to be one of the most unselfish and caring advocates, leaders and volunteers in the province. Jody received the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers in 2016 and in 2014 she received the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award for her dedication and service to the Coalmont/Tulameen Fire Department. This year, she has been chosen for the Medal of Good Citizenship.