



## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Plaques presented to youth, adult volunteers of the year

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – Amherst wouldn't be the vibrant caring community it is without 2020 Volunteer of the Year Michael Wilson and 2020 Youth Volunteer of the Year Rajan McKenney, Mayor David Kogon said on Oct. 8, 2020.

“Michael and Rajan epitomize what it is to be a volunteer,” Kogon said. “Their individual contributions to this community are invaluable to this town. They, and their many fellow volunteers, make the Town of Amherst a great place to live, work and play.”

The mayor made the comments moments before he, Deputy-Mayor Sheila Christie and councillors Darrell Jones, Terry Rhindress and Wayne MacKenzie presented the two volunteers with plaques marking their achievement, a presentation that was delayed by the COVID-19. Normally, the two would have been presented with their plaques in the early spring,



**Mayor David Kogon and Coun. Darrell Jones present Michael Wilson, Amherst's 2020 Volunteer of the Year, with a plaque on Oct. 8, 2020. Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst)**



but the pandemic got in the way.

Wilson, who was nominated for the honour by Shelley Carroll, Hal Davidson and Laura Farrow, has been a patron and supporter of numerous local causes, benefits, charities and businesses for more than 30 years.

As examples, he has volunteered with the Relay for Life for more than 15 years, the Cross Border, Amherst Valentines and Run for the Sun runs for more than 10 years. He has also spent more than a decade volunteering with the Community Christmas dinner and the Light the Night Walk for Autism.

Wilson has also helped with the Amherst Regional High School prom and graduation, numerous events the Cumberland YMCA and is a member of the CSC Pipes and Drum band.



**Deputy-Mayor Sheila Christie and councillors Terry Rhindress and Wayne MacKenzie present Rajan McKenney, Amherst's 2020 Youth Volunteer of the Year, with a plaque commemorating the achievement. (Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst)**

“We can’t speak as to his motivation,” his nominators wrote, “but whether he performs his good deed to honour the sick or those we’ve lost, his actions also serve to inspire those around him to make the most of each day.

“He brings a positive energy to every group he engages with. We are lucky to have him and our community is richer for having a wonderful and selfless person like Michael in it.”

Wilson represented the town during the recently held provincial volunteer award celebration,

“We don’t do the things we do for recognition,” he said. “But being recognized is nice. It’s a true honour.”

In addition to being a straight A student, McKenney, who was 17 years old and a Grade 11 student when nominated, is a “very school-spirited and community-oriented young man,” his nominator, Shelley Carroll, said.

At the time of his nomination, McKenney, now in Grade 12, had served at least three years on the Amherst Regional High School student council, including a stint as student council



president. He is also a band member, a basketball team player and the school athlete liaison.

In addition, he has volunteered with the Amherst Valentine Run for at least seven years and has served on the Amherst Youth Town Council for at least four years, including a term as youth mayor.

“Always smiling, Rajan approaches changes with relative ease, organizing his time to a fault,” his nominator wrote. “For any activity in which he participates, he is all-in. He is so busy we may not know the half of his community involvement.”

McKenney said it was a “huge honour” to receive the recognition.

“All of the work I do, I love doing,” he said. “It doesn’t feel like work. It’s just my everyday life in which I like helping others and making Amherst a better community.”

All of the volunteers nominated by various town organizations were recognized earlier this year via a slideshow that can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukN9SxWKdul&t=4s>

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