

Recipients – 2016 Access Equity and Human Rights Awards

Date: June 9, 2016
To: Executive Committee
From: City Manager
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report advises City Council of the results of the nomination process for the City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards. These Awards are the Aboriginal Affairs Award, the Access Award on Disability Issues, the Constance E. Hamilton Award on the Status of Women, the Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Trans and 2-Spirit Issues and the William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award.

The recipient of the Constance E. Hamilton Award is selected by the Women Members of Council and will be a supplementary item to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

City Council extend congratulations to the following who have been selected by a community panel as recipients of the 2016 City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards:

Aboriginal Affairs Award: Fizul Sima
Access Award: Maayan Ziv
Pride Award: Alex Abramovich
William P. Hubbard Award: Black Lives Matter Toronto

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications to this report.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

This program highlights the City's commitment to equity issues and provides an important opportunity to celebrate human rights achievements.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto City Council established five awards to recognize individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions on access, equity and human rights issues. Nomination forms are available in December of each year. Recipients are considered from nominations submitted by the public and selected by a panel comprised of community individuals with expertise and knowledge of the issues relevant to the areas covered by the awards. Recipients of the Constance E. Hamilton Award are selected by the Women Members of Council.

The recipients of the Awards are recognized at a ceremony in December 2016 commemorating the United Nations Human Rights Day that is celebrated on December 10th.

BACKGROUND

1. The City of Toronto Aboriginal Affairs Award

Established in 2003, the Aboriginal Affairs Award is presented annually to a person or persons or organization whose volunteer efforts have made a significant contribution towards improving the quality of life for the Aboriginal community in Toronto. Examples of contributions include services or advocacy work on issues such as health, shelter or street work, governance and self-determination, employment, economic development, human rights or cultural activities.

2. The City of Toronto Access Award for Disability Issues

The Access Award for Disability Issues was established during 1981 as part of the celebrations for the International Year for the Disabled. The Access Award is presented annually to a person or persons who have made a significant contribution towards improving the lives of people with disabilities by integrating them into all aspects of society.

Access can include the design of a new or renovated structure, program or service that contributes significantly towards the independent living of people with disabilities. Public acknowledgement of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others to help create an environment of inclusion.

3. Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Trans and 2-Spirit Issues

The Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Trans and 2-Spirit Issues was established in 2003 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Toronto City Council's decision to adopt a human rights policy to provide protection on the basis of sexual orientation. The Award honours individuals and/or organizations who have made or are making a significant or ongoing contribution to the well-being and advancement of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Trans and 2-Spirit communities in Toronto.

4. William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations

The William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award was established in 1987 and is named after the first person of African heritage to serve as a Toronto City Councillor. William P. Hubbard entered politics in 1894 and served for a total of 15 years. He was Acting Mayor in 1906 and 1907. He was an advocate of public ownership of the hydroelectric system and during his political career worked towards the founding of Ontario Hydro.

The William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award celebrates the achievements of Toronto residents who work, often without recognition, to foster a positive race relations environment. Their dedication and commitment has improved the quality of life for all in the City. The public acknowledgement of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others to become actively involved in the elimination of racism and prejudice.

5. The Constance E. Hamilton Award on the Status of Women

The Constance E. Hamilton Award was established in 1979 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Person's Case, which recognized that women were "persons" and could be appointed to the Senate of Canada. The Award was named after Constance E. Hamilton who in 1920 was the first woman elected to a municipal council in Toronto.

The Award recognizes person(s) who have made a significant contribution to improving the social, economic, cultural and political status of women in Toronto and whose efforts have received limited public attention. Recognition of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others in their efforts to achieve equality and to remove barriers.

COMMENTS

The nominating panel has selected recipients of the Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards from nominations submitted by the public. The members of the nominating panel were Nigel Barriffe, Urban Alliance on Race Relations; Ashley Brennan, Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto; Kate Murzin, Canadian Working on HIV and Rehabilitation; Wendy Porch, Disability, Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee; Debbie Burke-Benn, community member; Valerie John, Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) and Michael Charles, Centre for Human Rights, York

University. Staff support is provided by Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division, City Manager's Office.

1. Aboriginal Affairs Award: Fizul Sima

Fizul saw a need to help recruit, retain and advance Aboriginal employees in the Public Service. To meet this need, he volunteered with National Council of Aboriginal Federal Employees (NCAFE) in 2006. He was appointed as the Chair, of the Toolkit for Success Committee to address the issues of Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal cultural awareness. Fizul's recommendations and advocacy have led to the launch of Federal Public Service initiatives such as the Aboriginal Inventory for University Graduates, Aboriginal Management Trainee Program and the revised toolkits in Career Recruitment, Advancement and Cultural Awareness that have been shared nationally and locally in Toronto with the Dodem Kanonsha', Native Canadian Centre of Toronto and the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto. In the community where he grew up, Fizul volunteers at the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto in Scarborough East and has worked with others to collect over 800 books for Native Youth and Young Adults. He envisioned a library for the community and created six online videos on how to catalogue the books and provided the software to create a lending library system. The Scarborough Child and Family Centre Library at the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto was opened in April 2016.

2. Access Award: Maayan Ziv

By her very nature, Maayan is a true leader. From a young age, she challenged norms and worked within her community to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Her activities have ranged from paving ramps at her schools to creating awareness through her photography, to acting as ambassador for Muscular Dystrophy Canada and board member of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto. Maayan launched a mobile app called AccessNow. Understanding the impact that the Para PanAm games would have on Toronto, Maayan worked tirelessly to reach her first milestone, launching AccessNow days before the games began. AccessNow is a tool that uses crowdsourcing to collect and share accessibility information. This brilliant concept has created direct impacts and ripples of action and awareness, both in her community and abroad. Accessibility information is being shared on the AccessNow platform. Currently, AccessNow features over 5000 locations rated on their accessibility. Most of these places are in Toronto and the GTA. Maayan is creating a global village of change, a community of people with disabilities who empower each other to have access. Her mission is to reach a day where people with disabilities can find the access they need in their communities and throughout the world.

3. Pride Award: Alex Abramovich

Alex has spent the last decade fighting for the rights of LGBTQ2 homeless youth in Toronto. At first, no one seemed interested in the plight of this population of youth. Alex decided to do research for his PhD to prove to the City of Toronto, as well as shelter operators, that family rejection, and unsafe shelter situations were problems that were causing these youth to sleep on the streets of our city. In the last few years, his activism, research, and tireless dedication have brought this issue into the spotlight.

Due to Alex's hard work and advocacy, Toronto's first transitional housing program at YMCA's Spratt House opened its doors just recently.

4. William P. Hubbard Award: Black Lives Matter Toronto

Black Lives Matter Toronto, a coalition of Black Torontonians resisting anti-Black racism, are inspirational leaders, and a credit to Toronto. They have had a profound positive impact on race relations in Toronto. They have created, articulated, and enacted a new vision of responding to inequities experienced by Black people of African and Caribbean origin in Toronto. They have called on Torontonians to take up their responsibility to speak out and to ensure equity in our city. By acting so bravely to communicate that message so strongly, Black Lives Matter Toronto have increased social efficacy and social capital in our city thereby strengthening our democracy, improving our population's health, and saving lives in our city.

5. Constance E. Hamilton Award

The Women Members of Council will report separately on the results of their selection.

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SIGNATURE

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