

?Beacons? of support honoured by CMHA York Region-South Simcoe



People who go the extra mile for non-profits are shining stars, and this fall the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe (CMHA-YRSS) turned the spotlight on their own ?Beacons? who have helped light the path for 2022.

The organization recently presented its 2022 Beacon of Light Awards to individuals, businesses and community groups that have helped make their mental health initiatives possible over the last 12 months.

?Every year we recognize a number of our staff, we recognize volunteers, and we always recognize an amazing community partner that really champions mental health in York Region and South Simcoe,? says Cathy Cowan of CMHA-YRSS. ?They are making a profound impact on helping people in our community get the help that they need.?

Among this year's honourees were: Stacy Cameron of Community Homes for Opportunity with the Beacon of Character Award; Jacky Tam, Clinical Lead, Flexible Support/Housing First with the Beacon of Excellence; Mimi Wang, CBT Clinical Lead, Ontario Structured Physiotherapy with the Beacon of Innovation; Nisha Damani, Social Worker, Flexible Support Program, with the Beacon of Inclusion; Karen Leung, Director of Services, Ontario Structured Physiotherapy with the Beacon of Mentorship; Joanna Ross with the Volunteer Beacon of Light, Welcome Centre Immigrant Services with the Partner in Care Beacon of Light; Assertive Community Treatment Team ? South Simcoe with the Team Beacon of Light; and Vince's Market with the Community Beacon of Light.

?This year we were just so over-the-moon delighted to have several nominations from Vince's Market as part of our nomination process,? says Cowan. ?When it came down to judging, they were unanimously chosen to be this year's Community Beacon of Light because they have gone above and beyond this year.?

Vince's Market, which is based in Tottenham, Uxbridge, Sharon, and Newmarket, have found several ways to contribute to the CMHA-YRSS recently, including selecting the organization for their Community Product Initiative, which sees a portion of the proceeds from the sale of select items donated to community organizations.

?Vince's has been such an incredible partner for us, and not just for the CMHA, but really people in our community who need access to mental health services,? says Cowan. ?They have had their Community Product Initiative where they have been donating 15 per cent of sales from certain products to CMHA, especially those who are especially used for support youth mental health and MOBYSS. They were unbelievably involved with our Mental Health in Motion fundraiser in June and, in fact, they had a team who was one of their top fundraisers and their president was one of our top individual fundraisers, so they really went above and beyond there.?

Funds raised through 2022 will be dedicated to MOBYSS, which is the CMHA-YRSS's mobile mental health unit for youth which

travels throughout the areas in which they serve, including schools.

?Giving back to the community has always been a staple for Vince's,? says Vince's Market Community Support Ambassador Maria Ciarlandini. ?Our mission statement for Vince's Market is about giving back to the four communities we serve. We have pride in being part of the company. In the last couple of years, we created the Community Product so the Vince's Community Product initiative in which we kind of brought the grocery industry to join us to give back to our communities and that is something I am very proud of and Vince's is very proud of.

?This year with the Canadian Mental Health Association we were really able to amplify that and showcase the organization with a couple of ways: one being a barbeque outside of Vince's in the Sharon location, another was participating in the walk event that they had. We kind of were a little more focused on the CMHA and we're really honoured that they decided to choose us as their Beacon of Light this year and that was a big honour for us.

?I think that we recognize as a company that after these hard times the last couple of years, youth have been hit hard and this walk-in bus, which the CMHA has, really needs that support. We thought that would be really crucial after we're all getting through and coming out of the pandemic. We were really excited to focus on them and this walk-in clinic and we were hoping to bring both funds and awareness that all the communities understand that there is this walk-in clinic for youth.?

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