

Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award Entry Form

Community Name: Bridgetown and Area

Names of Groups within the community who have joined together to put forward this nomination:

Bridgetown and Area Friends of the Library Society
Bridgetown Area Chamber of Commerce
Bridgetown Area Community Fund
Bridgetown Area Garden Club
Bridgetown Area Sports Hall of Fame Committee
Bridgetown Ciderfest Committee
Bridgetown Community Recreation Association
Bridgetown Curling Club
Bridgetown Lions Club
Bridgetown Triathlon Committee
Bridgetown Volunteer Fire Department
Jubilee Park Natural Playground Group
Town of Bridgetown

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhZNX3y60ds&context=C35f8770ADOEgsToPDskIA8fVPbqvHgRmsPrx_2bUa.

By submitting your nomination you are agreeing to allow the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award to post your stories on the Award's website and to share these stories online with the Award's media partners.

Introduction

Bridgetown has a proud history of community spirit and citizen participation, as evidenced by the wide range of community facilities, programs and events found in this small community, located in the western end of the beautiful Annapolis Valley. Over the years, the community has come together to build and support facilities, such as the Memorial District Arena, Centennial Pool, Legion & Community Centre, Lawn Bowling Club, Curling Club, Lions Hall, Memorial Ball Field, Tennis Courts, Soccer Fields and Running Track, James House Museum, Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Park and others. Coupled with the many facilities are a host of community organizations that knit people together, one stitch at a time, with an incredible human resource of volunteers that organize and deliver programs for all ages and abilities. These programs include, but are not limited to, garden club, minor hockey, youth soccer, men's and women's soccer, Special Olympics, youth curling, seniors curling, library programs, kayaking, triathlon club, rambling group, tae kwan do, tai chi, rug hooking, running group, volunteer fire

department, chamber of commerce, and historical society. In addition to running their own programs, it is not unusual to see groups working together or providing support to other organizations. For example, the Men's Soccer group maintains the soccer fields for all to use; the Garden Club plants the town hall and Queen Street planters; and the running group contributes its membership fees towards library programs.

The community also comes together to stage or host many events throughout the year. Annual events include Winterfest, Fiddle Fling, Summer Active Living Fair, Canada Day Celebrations, Summer Bellydance Festival, Brite-Span Bridgetown Triathlon (the largest triathlon in Atlantic Canada), Ciderfest and the Christmas in Bridgetown Weekend, which features the Town Hall Tree Lighting, Moonlight Madness Festivities and the Santa Claus Parade. Bridgetown is also well known for hosting special events and sports tournaments. While there is usually a lead group behind any event, there is also a small army of volunteers who pitch in to help out.

Local businesses also play an important role by providing financial support, as well as goods, to many groups, projects and initiatives. For example, every December the local grocery store, a family run business that has served the community for close to sixty years, donates all of the food needed to put on a Christmas dinner for all of the children at the elementary school. Those same children make handmade decorations for the town Christmas tree each year, a tradition that dates back as long as anyone can remember.

To get a true sense of the community spirit in the Bridgetown area, one only needs look at the impressive list of community accomplishments of the past few years:

- New Bridgetown and Area Library – opened in 2011;
- New Bridgetown and Area Fire Hall – opened in 2010;
- Jubilee Park Natural Playground – built in 2010;
- A New Ice Plant for the Bridgetown Curling Club – installed in 2010;
- Bridgetown Area Sports Hall of Fame – launched in 2010;
- Bridgetown Area Youth Ambassador Program – launched in 2008;
- Bridgetown Area Community Fund – launched in 2008.

Building Community - New Bridgetown and Area Library



The new Bridgetown and Area Library has been a hit with the community from opening day.

The Bridgetown and Area Friends of the Library Society began meeting in January 2002. Its goal, to provide a modern, accessible, energy efficient, and environmentally friendly library facility for the Bridgetown area, was realized on March 3, 2011, with the opening of the Bridgetown and Area Library. The Society renovated the historic Revere building, which previously housed a gas station, restaurant and office building. Over the nine years, more than 45 citizens have participated at the regular monthly meetings. Several of these members are newcomers to the area, who have contributed greatly to the success of the library project.

Achieving this objective was a challenge for a small town in a difficult economy. To maintain its profile, the Society participated in community events, held fundraisers, solicited donations, and pursued government grants. For three years the local Scotiabank branch matched donations; local service clubs, businesses, community organizations, and professionals contributed cash and in-kind donations; one library patron, Joyce Devenney, remembered the Society with a substantial bequest in her will. Community fundraisers have included Ciderfest Silent Auction, Book-of-the-Month Lotteries, annual Spring Tea, and raffles of various donated works of art. The project received a Community ACCESS-ability grant, an Age-Friendly Communities grant, and a Seniors Connections New Horizons Project grant.

As the Society enters its second decade, momentum remains high in its continued support of the work of the new library. A 38% increase in circulation has resulted in two extra hours of operation per week. Librarian Connie Jodrey continues to organize varied programs for all age groups: Storytime for Preschoolers, Computer Tutorials, Show and Share demonstrations, Youth Writing Group, Kids After School Lounge, Seniors Book Club, Scrabble for Seniors, and Classic Movie Afternoons. The Bridgetown and Area Library's visibility and accessibility, as well as its attractive landscaping, provide a welcome addition to Bridgetown's downtown core.

Respectfully submitted by John Montgomerie and Laurie Zwicker, Bridgetown and Area Friends of the Library Society.

Serving the Community - New Bridgetown Area Fire Hall

The list of people to thank was almost as big as the community. That's because the community quite literally came together to help fund and build Bridgetown's new fire hall. After nine years of raising money and lobbying for funds, the building was officially opened on Saturday – and it's debt free.

“It's a wonderful, wonderful day,” said Bridgetown Mayor Art Marshall as a large crowd gathered in front of the shiny, new Bay Road facility. In his opening remarks, Marshall acknowledged all who played a part in bringing the new fire hall project to completion, from the volunteer firefighters, door-to-door fundraisers, various levels of government, corporate sponsors, service clubs, individuals and family donors, commemorative donations, and even those who donated items for raffle ticket draws and those who donated in-kind materials, equipment, and labour.

The hall's multipurpose room was dedicated by Chief Robbie Brown in memory of the late Donald Kaulbach who donated a total of \$200,000 to the building effort. "Today we would like to dedicate the main assembly hall in Donnie's memory in appreciation of his generosity to this project and his community," Brown said during the ceremony. The firefighters' club room was dedicated in memory of the Hill Family who made the BVFD one of their main benefactors during their lives of fundraising and support. When the last surviving member of the immediate family (Edna) passed away, their property was left to the fire department."

A cornerstone for the new fire hall was unveiled by Bridgetown's Youth Ambassador Bryan Rice, and one of the youngest members of the BVFD Brendon Skelton. It reads: "Dedicated to Volunteer Firefighters and in recognition of Community generosity and support; past, present and future. Officially Opened October 2, 2010."



The Bridgetown Volunteer Fire Department in front of their new Fire Hall.

Source: Annapolis County Spectator, October 5, 2010

A Place to Play - Jubilee Park Natural Playground



Hard work by a group of young families paid off when the Jubilee Park Natural Playground opened during Ciderfest.

In 2010 a group of local families created a natural playground in Bridgetown's Jubilee Park. Natural playgrounds use natural features and elements like mature trees, slides embedded in hills, fallen logs, tree stumps for seating and tables, vertical logs for forts and other components for a wide range of open ended play options for children.

The group worked with Bridgetown's Community Development Coordinator Steve Raftery to identify a site. The area selected offered lots of shade and mature trees and shrubs that were incorporated into the design. The idea behind the Jubilee Park playground is that of a dry stream bed which winds around an island (the hill), through the trees, and empties into a large sand area. The group then began to talk to potential sponsors/suppliers, as well as other families, and the project came together very quickly. ACL Construction, with support from some of their suppliers and the Town of Bridgetown, offered to build the basic framework of the playground.

With the basic space constructed, the families added other features. An old wooden dory was donated and installed in the sandpit. Annapolis County's Club 400 donated a hill slide. The families added log benches, log teeter-totters, stepping logs, stepping stones and shrubs.

The Jubilee Natural Playground had its Official Grand Opening and Family Picnic on September 18th. There was a huge crowd on hand and the children had a blast. Even before its official opening, it had become a daytime and evening destination for young families and an after-school destination for students. Remarkably the project went from an idea to its official opening in less than two months, yet if you saw it for the first time you would think it had been there forever. The group and the town continue to work on additional features.

Submitted by Steve Raftery, Community Development Coordinator, Town of Bridgetown, and the Jubilee Natural Playground Group

Here is a YouTube link to our Jubilee Park:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhZNX3y60ds&context=C35f8770ADOEgsToPDskIA8fVPbqvHgRmsPrx_2bUa.

Hurry Hard! - A New Ice Plant for the Bridgetown Curling Club

The Bridgetown Curling Club has been a focal point in the community for winter activities since 1923. We offer curling for Seniors, Special Olympians, Juniors, Little Rocks and regular competitive leagues. Other activities at the club include tournaments, card games, socials, lounge and kitchen rentals, and ice rentals.

Unfortunately October 2009 saw the breakdown of the ice plant at the club. To replace the ice plant we would need \$225,000.00. What were we to do? A decision was made to replace the ice plant knowing that our members and the people of Bridgetown and surrounding areas would support us. Community spirit was evident as the lobster suppers sold out, the chicken barbeques sold out and all fundraisers were successful. We raised the monies needed to match the federal and provincial grants required to purchase the ice plant equipment. Guarantors signed letters of credit with the banks to support our additional financial requirements. Many volunteers came forth to help with the removal

of the old plant and needed renovations to the building. Trades people and local business showed community support by offering services and supplies at reduced rates or for free. One retired volunteer provided over 125 hours of time to do all the painting that was required and help with the laying of the new floor. It was amazing to see the club members and the people of Bridgetown come together to help. Bridgetown has always been known as a great town for showing community spirit. Businesses and individuals are always available to help any organization that is in need. Way to go Bridgetown, you demonstrated great community spirit by supporting the curling club in a time of need; we thank you for being there. In December 2010 we proudly opened the doors to curling in Bridgetown again.



Curlers of all ages were happy to be back on the ice at the Bridgetown Curling Club.

Submitted by Brian Dauphinee, President, Bridgetown Curling Club

Honouring our Past - Bridgetown Area Sports Hall of Fame

Bridgetown has long enjoyed a rich and diverse sports heritage, recognized throughout Nova Scotia and beyond. This heritage includes the efforts and successes of individuals and teams at all levels of sport, both at home and internationally. The idea of creating a Bridgetown Area Sports Hall of Fame was a topic that often came up in coffee shops, at sports events and at community meetings. Finally, in a long overdue effort to recognize and honour Bridgetown's sports heritage, a group formed in the spring of 2010 to get the project off the ground. In the ensuing months the group rounded out its membership, established criteria for nominations, solicited nominations from the community and began to plan the Inaugural Induction Ceremony and Banquet.

In recognition of all those that play a role in sport, the Committee established four categories under which an application could be submitted: ATHLETE, TEAM, COACH/VOLUNTEER and BUILDER. The Committee also created the Bridgetown

Area Sport Hall of Fame Honour Roll, to recognize current year achievements (Provincial Level or higher) by Bridgetown area athletes, teams, coaches and volunteers.

The Inaugural Induction Ceremony and Banquet took place November 20, 2010, with a full house on hand at the Bridgetown Legion. It was a truly special evening as the community paid tribute to its first twelve inductees and sixteen honour roll citations. In the program for the evening, Committee Chair Bronson Rafuse wrote “Sport helps to define who we are as individuals and as a community and often provides many of our best moments and treasured memories. Sport also allows the participation of all interested persons. Athletes, coaches, builders, volunteers, officials, sponsors, parents and fans all play an important role in the learning curve of each defeat and in the thrill of every victory.”



The 1975 Bridgetown Men's Fours Lawn Bowling Team Provincial and National Champions was honoured in 2011.

Source: Bridgetown Area Sport Hall of Fame

Letting Youth Shine - Bridgetown and Area Youth Ambassador Program



Judy Marshall introduced the first ever Bridgetown and Area Youth Ambassador candidates at Bridgetown's Annual Public Forum in May 2008.

In early 2008 Judy Marshall, a retired educator and a long time Bridgetown resident, approached Bridgetown Town Council with a new idea – to start a Youth Ambassador Program. It was felt it was important for the town and surrounding area to have a young person represent the community at various festivals, but more so to give a voice to the youth in our area and promote what is positive about the extended community. The program was up and running a few weeks later. Candidates could be male or female and be in their grade eleven year when applying to the program. Candidates were to be energetic, enthusiastic and involved in their school and community. The successful candidate would be chosen during Ciderfest and would serve in the position for a year.

The Town of Bridgetown and the Bridgetown Area Chamber of Commerce contribute money toward a \$1500 scholarship for the winning candidate. The Youth Ambassador also receives a chain of office and is officially sworn in by the Mayor of Bridgetown at a meeting of the town council.

To date there have been four Youth Ambassadors chosen. As part of the application process, the candidates are asked to develop a project that will enhance the community. Projects have ranged from an initiative for active living for youth to a butterfly garden and this past year Jubilee Park was given a wonderful new entrance that is wheelchair accessible. The current Youth Ambassador will be making improvements to another area that is accessible to the general public. Along with the projects, the Ambassadors have been present at community functions and have helped out whenever necessary.

This has been a very positive program for the Bridgetown area and will hopefully continue for many years to come. The Town of Middleton has adopted the Youth Ambassador program and other Annapolis Valley towns have also shown an interest.

Submitted by Judy Marshall, Bridgetown Area Youth Ambassador Program

Looking to the Future - Bridgetown Area Community Fund



Directors of the Bridgetown Area Community Fund with representatives from 2009 grant recipients, Clarence Community Hall and Jack & Jill Nursery School.

Over the years our community has benefited greatly from the generosity of many of its residents. One donation that continues to impact the community is a bequest made by former resident and business owner Max Young. In 1974 Mr. Young left the residue of his estate to be used for maintenance of the Bridgetown Arena. The residue of his estate proved to be quite substantial, over \$70,000.00, invested in bank shares. Wisely the Town chose to keep the shares invested and use the dividend income to support the Arena. The shares generated strong returns over the years. The fund has generated over \$300,000 in dividend income. Another \$150,000 has been raised through the sale of shares to support major repairs and upgrades. The current value of the fund exceeds \$400,000 and is generating about \$15,000 annual income. Having funds available has also helped the Town and the Recreation Association leverage funding support from other levels of government for various improvements.

With the Max Young Fund as an example, the idea of creating a Bridgetown Area Community Fund (BACF) was introduced at Bridgetown's Annual Public Form in May 2007. The idea was embraced by a dedicated group of community-minded individuals and the Bridgetown Area Community Fund was launched in 2008, as a permanent endowment fund that supports the broad interests of the community, including culture, arts, heritage, health, sport, recreation and other cornerstones of our vibrant community. To date the fund has awarded small grants to: the provision of accessible transportation, the local search and rescue group, a local nursery school, a community hall, a high school band trip and the natural playground project. While already positively impacting the community, its real benefit will be in the future, as the endowment fund grows.

Submitted by Steve Raftery, Community Development Coordinator, Town of Bridgetown, and the Bridgetown Area Community Fund



Bridgetown's summer day camp program helped plant a butterfly garden at Jubilee Park.



Bridgetown's New Year's Levee is co-hosted by the Bridgetown Legion and the Town of Bridgetown



Each year the elementary school choir performs at Bridgetown's Tree Lighting Ceremony.