VERA 2018 RECIPIENTS CONT...

BILL ISRAEL

In 1989, Bill began volunteering with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Greater Victoria. He served as the Chair of the Board of Directors (BOD) for two consecutive terms from 1994-1998. Then worked with United Way of Greater Victoria in 1999 where he became a member of several committees. He was on the Board of Directors from 2001-2010 and was the Chair of the Board for two terms between 2006-2010. In addition, Bill was the Chair of the Major Gifts Committee for the 2010-2011 Campaign; plus, the Campaign Cabinet, 2010-2014, 2017-2018. Currently, Bill participates on the Community Philanthropic Advisory Council, volunteering with their fundraising efforts.

In recent years, after retiring as a Professional Management Consultant in Human Resources and Training in 2008, Bill became a Volunteer Trainer for the Advance Care Planning program with the Vancouver Island Health Authority. He also volunteers with Laren Society, The Bill Mudge Halfway House, The Salvation Army Halfway House, The Church of Truth, Community of Conscious Living, in addition to, The Restorative Justice Coalition of William Head Institution. Bill also volunteers his services in advanced care planning, social functions, plus, events, by facilitating an intensive journal program for inmates and leading a three-hour monthly workshop for the Recovery Skills Program.

IN THEIR WORDS...

"I've always been grateful that I came to know "Mr. Israel" as a key-player in one of this community’s largest fundraising organizations, but I've always been more honored to call him Bill, and get to know him as one of the kindest volunteers I've had the pleasure to meet— Lilaine Galway, enrolment Coordinator, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Victoria"
VERA 2018 RECIPIENTS CONT...

CHRISTINE JOHNSTON

“Saying yes to life and whatever life offers” is Christine’s life motto. She has volunteered with the First Unitarian Church of Victoria since 1997 and has provided services in roles such as President, Treasurer of the Social Justice Coalition, Chair, of the Refugee Sponsorship Committee. As an individual, Christine has sponsored several families who have immigrated to Victoria. She received The Knight Award, which is given by the national Canadian Unitarian Council to one person in Canada every year.

Since 1999, she has volunteered with the Kairos branch, a multi-faith organization which focuses on social justice, human rights, and compassion, at local, national, and international levels. In this position, she represents the Unitarians and shares her own concerns for local poverty, ill-health, environmental concerns, and the wellbeing of First Nations.

In 1999, Christine started the Victoria support team for Child Haven International which oversees the adoption of children in India, Nepal, Tibet, and Bangladesh. In addition, since 2000, Christine has volunteered with several other groups including the Stephen Lewis Foundation’s Grandmothers Helping Grandmothers in Africa, Canada Tibet Committee, West Coast Environmental Law, along with, other local initiatives such as The Dandelion Society and Mustard Seed.

IN THEIR WORDS...

She exemplifies the best in all of us as we age and attempt to serve and give meaning to a better way of life — Galina Coffey Lewis

VERA 2018 RECIPIENTS CONT...

GAELAN DE WOLF

Gaelan has been volunteering with the Oak Bay Emergency Program since 1989, providing local residents in the District with education on how to best prepare for any emergency or natural disaster if one should occur. During the Oak Bay Summer Markets, she shares “her friendly and positive manner. Gaelen is always very helpful in representing Oak Bay Emergency”—John McBride.

In 2008, she commenced volunteering with the Monterey Recreation Centre, a service that provides Oak Bay seniors with opportunities to learn, socialize and maintain healthy lifestyles. Gaelan has assisted with Canada Day events, the Annual Bazaar and Rummage Sale, the Family History Club, the Merry Widows Club, the Computer Club, and the Monterey Recreation Activity Association.

IN THEIR WORDS...

What is it like to work with Gaelan? You are always struck by her warmth, openness and enthusiasm; and that doesn’t change… She makes all the volunteers feel valued. She is always kind… Gaelan is one of life’s unsung heroes and it is time to recognize her many contributions. She is always there when you need her… She recognizes and celebrates the value everyone brings to any place where she is involved — Eileen Grant, Manager, Oak Bay Emergency Program (OBEP)
ISLA EVANS

Isla has been volunteering since the 1990s, supporting residents, spreading joy and helping people become healthier. She delivered meals to residents for Meals on Wheels from 1990 to 2002, distributed personalized Christmas hampers for the Mustard Seed Food Bank to residents, plus volunteered at Thrifty Foods Sendiial since 1993 as a personal shopper.

From 2000-2003, Isla helped spread the Christmas spirit by serving dinner with the Glad Tidings Church; 2008-2016 she helped raise cancer awareness and provide support by walking in the Breast Cancer Awareness and Terry Fox Walks. Isla personally raised $20,000 in donations from these walks. Her supportive and caring nature is demonstrated by her donations of personal furnishings to help support immigrants.

IN THEIR WORDS...

Simply put Isla is an inspiration to us all... We are all richer for having known and worked with Isla for the past several years—Norma Haskett, Irene Magil, Francine Theoret, Linda Lomas, Ted Riches, and Sharon Welby; Friday Shopping Group Fairfield Thrifty Foods

ISOBEL CARTER

Isobel has been volunteering by playing the organ at Hymn Sing at the Beacon Hill Villa since 2005. Since then, she has only missed one opportunity to play the organ due to a bad cold. In addition, she plays the organ for several churches around the James Bay area.

At Beacon Hill Villa, she has a very easy-going spirit. When the recreation manager’s toddler presses all of the buttons and changes the settings to the organ, Isobel will simply laugh and change the settings back. At 98 years old, when Isobel isn’t able to volunteer in person, she provides services over the computer from her home.

IN THEIR WORDS...

Isobel is extraordinary because she continues to prioritize giving back to the community and she overcomes the challenges in her path. It is apparent that Isobel has maintained exceptional level health and she is proof that having a positive outlook and helping others is not just good for the community, but it promotes personal wellness and is part of our nature as human beings.

— Doug Csima, General Manager
JOAN BRILLINGER

Joan has volunteered with the Esquimalt United Church. In 1973, she became a Sunday school teacher, a music teacher, and has sat on several committees. Joan has helped children from the ages of 3 to 14 years old learn the history of religion and ancient stories through music, drama as well as arts and crafts.

In addition to being a music teacher at church, she joined the choir in 1986. She participated in a ukulele singers group with the Juan de Fuca Senior Centre from 1995 to 2001 and was a member of the Hampton Singers with the Silver Threads Senior Centre from 2005 to 2010, where she helped entertain in care homes and senior residences.

Her interest in conducting research lead to Joan volunteering with the Victoria Operatic Society to produce a 50-year Anniversary Book highlighting the past work and history of the organization in 1995. In 2012, Joan used these research skills to explore the 100-year history of the Esquimalt United Church and compile a 100-year Anniversary book filled with pictures and historical documents.

IN THEIR WORDS...

When Joan’s physical limitations forced her to give up the digging, hoeing and raking at church garden work parties, she turned instead to providing muffins to feed the volunteers and bringing plants from her garden for the annual plant sale—Marjory Acton, volunteer, Esquimalt United Church

JOAN CHEVRIER

With a veteran husband, Joan has been a member of the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association since 1991 where with her genuine caring nature, she provides assistance and guidance to Veterans and their families. In 2012, Joan was nominated for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Media for her work and in 2015, she became the Membership Chair.

Since 2001, Joan has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #91 and is responsible for preparing, cooking and catering weddings and Celebrations of Life. As she loves to help others and enjoys a challenge, Joan has made the skirt for the stage and covers for two pool tables.

As a member of the West Shore Lions Club since 2001, Joan was awarded the Lions Foundation of Canada Judge Brian Stevenson Fellowship medal in 2006 and has been the President of the Club three times. She helps cater the pancake breakfast for local schools, Remembrance Day events, and lunches for after school programs.

IN THEIR WORDS...

When I asked her why she enjoyed doing so much volunteer work she said, “I like working with different people and those in need of help in any area. My greatest enjoyment in life is to help children in need, seeing the wonderful expression on people’s faces when we do something special for them”—Marilyn Sjostrom, Royal Canadian Legion, Prince Edward Branch #91
NANCY SING

Nancy began volunteering in 1970 with Victoria Chinatown Lions, where she helped sell raffle tickets at their events and served as the Fundraising Committee Chair for the Baton and Drum Corp from 1970 to 1972. During these years she also volunteered with the Children’s International Summer Village where she supported the junior leadership program by acquiring donations of food for meals at the camp.

Nancy began to volunteer at the Uplands Golf Course from 1985 to 1988 where she served on the Board of Directors to help ensure the long-term sustainability of the club. This led her to her creative idea of donating Uplands golf members time as caddies and put the $15 caddy fee towards the BC Children’s Hospital which raised $2,100 the first year, and $5,000 the following.

Between 1990-1994, during the Commonwealth Games, Nancy provided reception duties, supported pre-game events, and served on the Venue Protocol Team. For more than a decade (2005-2017), Nancy volunteered with artsREACH Society, the non-profit organization started by her daughter. She served on the planning committee for the annual Golf for Art Tournament and supported the annual Colour Your Palate fundraiser. Since 2016, Nancy has been volunteering with the Goward House Society where she provides reception duties and is an instructor of a beginner Chinese Mah Jong course.

IN THEIR WORDS...

artsREACH would not be the success it is today, without the support that my mother provided to help us raise funds and awareness of this valuable community program— Marilyn Sing

SYLVIA CAMPBELL

Sylvia began volunteering in 1988 with AIDS Vancouver Island, where she enjoyed traveling to high schools to distribute pamphlets, condoms, and give information to teens about AIDS. In 1992 she volunteered with St. Aidan’s Community Services where she was on the building committee to plan the new addition to the church. She helped prepare the opening of the daycare by leading interviews for the Early Childhood Educator and chose the furnishings for the daycare.

From 1993 to 1995, Sylvia volunteered with the Vancouver Island Cancer Lodge where she helped serve supper as well as prepare and clean-up the area for tea. This volunteer service was inspired by the care that she and her husband Jim had received while he attended the lodge for radiation treatment.

Since 1997, Sylvia has been volunteering with St. Aidan’s United Church of Canada Thrift Shop. She’s the founder, coordinator, and manager and oversees the operations of the thrift shop, its volunteers and coordinates with other non-profit agencies in the Capital Regional District. As Sylvia says “I volunteer because God has been good to me, and I like to give back.”

IN THEIR WORDS...

It is a privilege to have Sylvia as a friend. She is kind and compassionate, and has added so much to the life of St. Aidan’s United Church with all her contributions through the years— Sheila Taylor, St. Aidan’s United Church
THE VALUED ELDER RECOGNITION AWARD

The Valued Elder Recognition Award (VERA) came into being when concerned, involved seniors wished to honor and celebrate their fellow volunteers. The name VERA was chosen because it represents:

- The word veracity, meaning truthfulness and honesty.
- The Latin root, verax veracis from verus, “true.”
- In Slavic languages, this given name means “faith.”

Today’s Valued Elder Recognition Award honours each nominee, all of whom exemplify VERA. The Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health and the Eldercare Foundation want to recognize and honour these individuals who, over their lifetime, have given exemplary service in helping others.

VERA SELECTION COMMITTEE

For 2018
Scott Hofer, Director, Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health
Lois Holizki, Manager, Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health
Lori McLeod, Executive Director, Eldercare Foundation
Leah Potter, Administrator, Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health

VERA PLAQUE

All Valued Elder Recognition Award recipients are commemorated on plaques located at the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health, R Hut, UVic campus; off McKenzie Avenue. Please come and visit us!