

MAYOR'S   
RECOGNITION  
 AWARDS

**2026 Nomination Package**

**Nomination Deadline:**

**March 27, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.**

The Mayor's Recognition Awards recognizes individuals or groups from the City of Red Deer, whose actions have brought honour and recognition to Red Deer.

Volunteerism is an important aspect of the awards and is defined as "an elective and freely chosen act of an individual or group giving their time and labour, often for community service without being paid for it."

Award recipients are selected by the Mayor's Recognition Awards Committee, with the exception of the Mayor's Special Award, which is chosen by the Mayor.

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## Nomination Process

- All sections of the nomination form must be completed in full, and supporting documents **must** be provided.
- For a nomination to be considered, the nomination form must be signed by a nominator and a seconder (**Note: Individual self-nominations are not recommended**).
- An application that is not signed by a nominator and seconder will be returned.
- Once an application form has been received, the nominator and seconder will receive an acknowledgment of receipt from Legislative Services.
- If a nominator has no acknowledgement of receipt or communication by mid-May, please contact Legislative Services to inquire about status of application.
- All nominees and nominators will be advised if their nomination has been successful or unsuccessful in May, 2026. Details of the award ceremony will also be provided at that time to successful nominees.

## Nominating a Group

For the purpose of this award, “group” means two or more individuals assembled together and having some common purpose, whose work shall be beyond the normal scope of their professional duties.

**If this nomination is for a group, please attach a complete list of all members (first and last name) as well as a contact liaison for the group that includes telephone number and email address.**

## Award Criteria

- All nominees must be residents of the City of Red Deer or be nominated for service to/within Red Deer or be a member of a group that is based in Red Deer.
- Posthumous nominations are allowed in all categories for up to five years following the nominee's death.
- The nominator and/or seconder of a nomination cannot be current members of the Mayor’s Recognition Awards Committee.
- There is no limit to the number of awards that may be presented in any category in any given year.
- Sitting City Council members are not eligible for an award, however, are eligible after a two-year hiatus from Council.
- Subject to the discretion of the Committee and/or Mayor, a span of three years must elapse before a previous recipient will be considered for a Mayor’s Recognition Award.
- The Committee reserves the right to assign a nomination to an alternate category provided one nominator agrees to the reassignment.
- Decisions of the Committee regarding the selection of award recipients will be final

## Biography

Please provide a biographical outline of the nominee's outstanding achievements, contributions, and characteristics. Describe how the nominee inspires others to participate and/or encourages them to strive for excellence. If the nominee is selected for an award, this information may be edited and read at the awards ceremony.

## History of Achievement

To support the nomination process, please submit a history of the achievement(s) of the nominee(s) (please attach additional sheets as necessary). Please do not use acronyms in your description. Elements of the achievement history should include:

- An outline of how the nominee(s) fits the criteria of the award;
- Dates of service with Red Deer groups/organizations (if applicable);
- History of prior achievements before 2026, and any special achievements;
- Previous recognition or awards the nominee has received;
- How the nominee's actions have brought honour and recognition to the City of Red Deer, and any long term benefits or impact to the community.

## Supporting Comments and Documentation

Supporting documentation **must** be attached to every nomination to provide background and proof of the nominee(s) achievements. Supporting documentation can include:

- Newspaper articles/publications;
- Copy of award or proof of achievement;
- Letters of support (should include the writer's relationship to the nominee and description of the nominee's outstanding achievements, their contribution to the community and how their contribution has impacted the community).
- Testimonials
- Photos

## Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information

Nomination packages become the property of The City of Red Deer. Do not forward originals. Information contained in the Nomination Package may be used in publications, media releases, and on The City's website.

The personal information collected through the Mayor's Recognition Awards Nomination Form is for the purpose of accepting nominations for the awards. This collection is authorized by section 4(c) of the Protection of Privacy Act and section 3 of the Municipal Government Act. For questions about the collection of personal information, contact [CouncilCommittees@reddeer.ca](mailto:CouncilCommittees@reddeer.ca), or 403-342-8132.

## **Additional Information**

For additional information regarding the Mayor's Recognition Awards, please refer to The City of Red Deer Bylaw 3576/2016, *Committees Bylaw "Mayor's Recognition Awards"* at [www.reddeer.ca](http://www.reddeer.ca).

**Please contact Legislative Services at 403-342-8132** if you require further information on the process.

**Thank you for participating in the nomination process for the Mayor's Recognition Awards!**

# **AWARD CATEGORIES**

## **Community Builder**

The Community Builder Award recognizes outstanding individuals or groups, whose work is beyond the scope of their professional duties. Nominees must demonstrate:

1. Special or unique qualities that highlight how the person/group has made a difference in the community through leadership, dedication, innovation and creativity, with long term benefits or impact to the community.

## **Distinguished Voluntary Service**

The Distinguished Voluntary Service Award nominees:

1. Must have made a significant impact, enhanced the quality of life and/or implemented a significant positive change in Red Deer.
2. Will be individuals.
3. Volunteer work shall be beyond the normal scope of their professional duties.

## **Fine and Performing Arts**

The Fine and Performing Arts Award nominee(s):

1. Will be individuals or groups of individuals.
2. Must have gained a national or international acceptance or recognition of outstanding specific achievement, and/or a series of accomplishments over time in one or more of the arts.
3. May hold amateur or professional status.
4. Maybe be considered for an award in the year immediately following the year in which the specific achievement occurred, or in recognition of a series of accomplishments over time.
5. Are only eligible to receive an award in this category once for the same fine or performing art.

## **Mayor's Special Award**

The Mayor's Special Award is the highest possible recognition from the City of Red Deer.

1. Nominees will be individuals or groups who have demonstrated any of the following:
  - a. Humanitarianism; and/or
  - b. Exceptional achievement; and/or
  - c. An act of heroism or bravery.
2. Volunteer work shall be beyond the normal scope of their professional duties.

The Mayor makes the selection of the Mayor's Special Award recipient(s) from the nominations received. The Mayor's Special Award will not necessarily be presented each year. Where special circumstances warrant, more than one award may be presented in a given year.

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

**Prior to submission of nomination form and information, please check to ensure:**

- All information on the nomination form is filled out.
- All supporting documentation is attached.
- The nominator has signed the form.
- The seconder has signed the form.
- You have indicated whether or not the nominee knows she/he is being nominated.
- The nominator has confirmed that the nominee has not received an award in the last three years.

Once completed, please submit the online form and you will receive an email confirmation of the application.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the form, please reach out to:

Legislative Services

The City of Red Deer

Box 5008 (4914-48 Avenue) Red Deer, AB T4N 3T4

Email: [legislativeservices@reddeer.ca](mailto:legislativeservices@reddeer.ca)

Phone: 403-342-8132

Nominations will be accepted until **Friday March 27, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.**

MAYOR'S   
RECOGNITION  
 AWARDS

**PREVIOUS AWARDS RECIPIENTS:**

**2025**

**2024**

**2023**

June 18, 2025

## Mayor's Recognition Awards 2025

The annual awards program serves to recognize and thank citizens for their significant contributions to our community. In addition to the Mayor's Special Awards, 24 groups and individuals were honoured in the following award categories:

- Athletics
- Distinguished Voluntary Service
- Community Builder

### **Athletics:**

Recognizing individuals or teams placing first in a national event or competition, or placing first, second or third in an international event or competition sanctioned by the respective national or international governing body or placing first at the highest possible level that can be achieved in their sport.

Cody Corotan  
Mary Marshall  
Sofia Reyes

### **Red Deer 18U AAA BAEL CarStar Braves**

Gavin Armstrong  
Jake Brooks  
Cash Buchwitz  
Keefer Callaghan  
Owen Coumont  
Nathan Flewelling  
Addison Giesbrecht  
Evan Gorr  
Hudson Hoy  
Corbin Lochhead  
Zach MacDonald  
Sawyer Marshall  
Tanner Morrow  
Nate Mountjoy  
Noah Nakonechny

Ryder Petryshen  
Mason Proctor  
Evan Russell  
Luke Schmitt  
Dominic Skjonsberg  
Michael Szpak  
Nathan Vennard  
Nicholas Westendorp  
Josh Zanolli, *Head Coach*  
Brad Morrow, *Assistant Coach*  
Curtis Flewelling, *Assistant Coach*  
Jeff MacDonald, *Assistant Coach*  
Bobbi Buchwitz, *Manager/Chef de Mission*

### **ISKF Red Deer**

Cody Corotan  
Emma Gabriela Gutierrez  
Fiona Nelson  
Sofia Reyes

Rahul Channan, *Head Coach & Chief Instructor*  
Jonard Corotan, *Chief Instructor*  
Geovanni Gutierrez, *Chief Instructor*

**Hunting Hills Lightning Bantam Football**

Destin Anderson	Kellan Mandrusiak	Joe Hedlund, Assistant Coach
Noah Bootsma	Seth McLeod	Colin Lampard, Assistant Coach
Jordan Champney	Asher Olmstead	Jordan Lenius, Assistant Coach
Wylder Chaput	Jaxen Paradis	Konrad McDougall, Assistant Coach
David Clemens	Leon Plumley	Chad Murray, Assistant Coach
Liam Cuffe	Lucas Plumley	Jamie Plumley, Assistant Coach
Jack Daisley	Jackson Puckett	Skylar Rempel, Assistant Coach
Xander Diletzoy	Grayson Rowe	Jr Rivera, Assistant Coach
Hayden Foster	Jack Shafer	Kayden Walper, Assistant Coach
Killian French	Drayden Shaw	Reagan Niemeyer, Athletic Therapist/Trainer
Hunter Fulton	Kian Siemens	Sandy Johnson, Equipment Manager
Dax Green	Bethany Stevens	
Julio Gutierrez-Ruiz	Fennis Tang	
Chase Hall	Jacob Thorsteinson	
Ben Hawrylak	Hudson Voice	
Malachi Herbert	Chase Warnick	
Kolbie Hernberg	Seth Weir	
Kyler Hughes	Lennox Williams	
Caidyn Johnson	Josh Sorensen, Head Coach	
Kobin Lampard	Corey French, Assistant Coach	
Jax Lee		
Felix Lindsay		

**Lindsay Thurber Raiders Senior Boys Volleyball**

Josh Cho	Jasper Kennedy	Taye Savoury
Trent Deschnes	Daniel Lakhtorov	Gavin Watts
Tyson Dezutter	Jorryn Mckenzie	Travis Czainski, Head Coach
Wil Fidek	Lucas Moore	Terence McMullen, Assistant Coach
Caeden House	Koen Penninga	Kei McMullen, Manager
Blake Hughes	Hudson Penz	
Jamie Kelly	Grady Rodzinyak	

**U15A Red Deer Chiefs Lacrosse**

Anson Albrecht	Threan Painchaud	Darren Kinnear, Head Coach
Cooper Bowen	Gavin Roth	Lee Siemens, Assistant Coach
Liam Dow	Bronson Scott	Steve Albrecht, Assistant Coach
Tucker Istace	Lucas Seidel	Adam Roth, Trainer
Pierson Larocque	Kian Siemens	Melanie Roth, Manager
Gavin McEvoy	Tyrell Strauss	
Seth Mcleod	Dylan Turner	
Dominick Meeds	Mason Williams	
Hadin Nelson	Noah Zeigler	

**Distinguished Voluntary Service:**

Recognizing outstanding volunteers who have made a significant impact, enhanced the quality of life and/or implemented a significant positive change in Red Deer.

Marie & Howard Antoniuk  
Gerry Campbell  
Martin Fletcher  
Kevin Hanrahan  
Ian Ihme  
Kiwanis Club of Red Deer

France Pajares  
Franco Pajares  
Sandy Polis & Teddy  
Janet Sole  
Audrey Thorhauer  
Bobbie-Jo Van Heck

**Community Builder:**

Recognizing outstanding individuals or groups who have demonstrated special or unique qualities and who have made a difference in our community through leadership, dedication, innovation and creativity, with long term benefits.

Dieulita Datus-Hall  
René-Osmari Diakité (posthumous)  
Derek Fredeen

William Henderson  
Bang Tran

**Mayor's Special Award 2025**

The highest honour given by The City of Red Deer, the Mayor's Special Award recognizes individuals and groups for humanitarianism, exceptional achievement, or an act of heroism or bravery.

**Renaë Clark**

Renaë has been a driving force behind youth baseball in Red Deer, serving as the General Manager of Red Deer Minor Baseball Association for 13 years and holding key roles on the Baseball Alberta board. Her leadership has seen registration grow from 250 to over 900 players, but her most meaningful contribution has been the creation of the Red Deer Minor Baseball Challenger Program; an inclusive initiative that provides children with physical and cognitive delays the opportunity to play baseball in a supportive environment. Passionate, selfless, and community-minded, Renaë is known for her deep personal connection with every child in the program, going above and beyond to ensure each feels valued, right down to personalized jerseys that bring smiles to all involved. Her impact extends well beyond the field, inspiring everyone around her with her tireless dedication and humility.

**Isabel Bolhuis**

Isabel is a dedicated and compassionate volunteer whose commitment to education and community service has made a significant impact in Red Deer. Isabel has brought a rich multicultural background and teaching experience to her volunteer work with the Red Deer Public Library's Adult Literacy Program. Donating between 18 and 40 hours per month, she has supported 13 learners from diverse backgrounds helping them improve their language skills, build confidence and successfully integrate into Canadian society. Isabel's warm, respectful and encouraging nature allows her to build strong relationships with learners, many of whom are newcomers facing significant cultural and linguistic challenges. Isabel often goes the extra mile to support learners with urgent needs and real-life situations. Isabel's unwavering dedication, humility and belief in lifelong learning exemplify the spirit of distinguished voluntary service and have brought lasting value to the Red Deer community.

**Elder Linda Ophus**

Elder Linda is a respected Cree Elder, language keeper, and community leader whose generosity, strength, and spirit have left a lasting mark on Red Deer. Originally from Wabasca, she has made Red Deer her home and classroom—freely sharing her time, wisdom, and teachings with all who seek them. In 2024, she volunteered to teach Cree language lessons, driven by a deep passion for revitalizing Indigenous language and culture. Her gentle guidance has helped many reconnect with their roots and find healing through knowledge once taken away. A member of the Urban Aboriginal Voices Society and a regular volunteer with groups such as Red Deer Polytechnic, Clean Harbour Society, and The City of Red Deer, Linda embodies resilience and grace. Even when speaking on painful topics like Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2-Spirit People—a tragedy she knows personally—she does so with courage and love. Elder Linda Ophus leads through kindness, truth, and quiet strength, and is a living example of reconciliation in action.

June 19, 2024

## Mayor's Recognition Awards 2024

The annual awards program serves to recognize and thank citizens for their significant contributions to our community. In addition to the Mayor's Special Awards, 24 groups and individuals were honoured in the following award categories:

- Fine and Performing Arts
- Distinguished Voluntary Service
- Community Builder

### Fine and Performing Arts:

Recognizing individuals and groups who have gained national or international acceptance or recognition of outstanding specific achievement and/or a series of accomplishments over time in one or more of the arts.

Dr. James Bicigo

### Team Canada Dance

Alexane Best

Éva Best

Kaitlyn Rumohr

Hazel Stapley

### Distinguished Voluntary Service:

Recognizing outstanding volunteers who have made a significant impact, enhanced the quality of life and/or implemented a significant positive change in Red Deer.

Howard Barker

Amanda Blair

Valdene Callin

Lori Cartwright

Don George

Kim Jeske

George Meston

Arun Mishra

Irene Sisson

Esther Smith

Irene Wells

Robert Winchell

Martha Winchell

### Bariatric Clinic Peer Support Group

Jodi Dore

Melanie Timms

### Red Deer Curling Junior Program

Lynne Entz

Brent Young

### Community Builder:

Recognizing outstanding individuals or groups who have demonstrated special or unique qualities and who have made a difference in our community through leadership, dedication, innovation and creativity, with long term benefits.

Gerald Kress

Hoang Le

Robin McKay

Dr. Love Nwigwe

Jan Underwood

### **Mayor's Special Award 2024**

The highest honour given by The City of Red Deer, the Mayor's Special Award recognizes individuals and groups for humanitarianism, exceptional achievement, or an act of heroism or bravery.

### **The Donald and Lacey Families**

This group truly exemplifies the spirit of philanthropy, volunteerism, and community building in Red Deer and central Alberta. Led by the late Jack Donald and his wife, Joan, the Donald's unwavering dedication to community service and giving back has touched countless lives throughout the community.

In 1964, Jack and Joan, along with their children Kathy and John, planted roots in Red Deer, laying the foundation for Parkland Oil Products Ltd, a modest venture that blossomed into Parkland Fuel Corporation, now Canada's leading independent fuel marketer and distributor.

Together with Kathy and John's families, they have continued to generously support numerous organizations and causes in the community, including the Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre, Westerner Park, Red Deer Polytechnic and the Donald School of Business, Science, and Computing, Red Deer Hospice, the United Way, Rotary Club of Red Deer, the Lending Cupboard, Red Deer Regional Hospital Foundation... and the list goes on.

The Donald and Lacey families truly embody the spirit of community service and the values of compassion and empathy. Their collective efforts have enriched the lives of countless individuals in Red Deer and Central Alberta.

Reflecting on his induction into a business hall of fame back in 2011, Jack Donald encapsulated his philanthropic philosophy through his wife Joan's words: "You can't wear a catcher's mitt on both hands. You have to be able to throw something back. That's very true of what we are trying to do."

June 14, 2023

## Mayor's Recognition Awards 2023

### Athletics

Recognizes individuals or teams placing first in a national event or competition; or placing first, second or third in an international event or competition sanctioned by the respective national or international governing body; or placing first at the highest possible level that can be achieved in their sport.

Grace Anne Campbell  
Molly Simpson

### Red Deer Catalina Swim Club

Tristan Cote (Head Coach)  
Tejas Nayar (Assistant Coach)  
Evan Kafara (Coach)  
Abbi Bahler  
Ben Bahler  
Annika Erickson  
Ryan Falk  
Kaymin Graham  
Myles Grant  
Grace Hitchcock  
Kingston Hitchcock

Jaycob Hoedel  
Anna Horbushko  
Jose Javier Martinez  
Addison Pruden  
Noah Thomas  
Priya Thomas  
Sofia Tokar  
Parks Tweedale  
Cooper Waddle  
Maddie Wiens

### Red Deer Tennis Club Members

Darrell Nichols  
Jean Anne Nichols

Ferdie Soriano  
Barb Young

### Distinguished Voluntary Service

Recognizing outstanding volunteers who have made a significant impact, enhanced the quality of life and/or implemented a significant positive change in Red Deer.

Wayne Blenkhorn  
Benny Borgman  
Lorraine Cooper  
Stephen Cooper  
Cody Howitt  
Jaanvi Lal  
Fern Lenihan

Janessa McCormack  
Bob Pelletier  
Linda Rowe  
Myrna Schmidt  
Denise Sorensen  
Jack Swainson

### Fine and Performing Arts

Recognizing individuals and groups who have gained national or international acceptance or recognition of outstanding specific achievement and/or a series of accomplishments over time in one or more of the arts.

Lacey Oake

### Community Builder

Recognizing outstanding individuals or groups who have demonstrated special or unique qualities and who have made a difference in our community through leadership, dedication, innovation and creativity, with long term benefits.

Lena Drok  
Zainab Mohamoud  
Nancy Paish  
Marie Payne

**Central Alberta Crime Prevention Centre Board**

Jeffrey Dawson	Debb Mann
Christa Elliot	Shane Pahara
April Furness	Lorraine Pitts
Melissa Jacobson	Doug Redmond
Dawn Lundquist	Debbie Romkes

**Parkland Regional Safety Committee's Fallen Worker Legacy Park Sub-Committee**

Sally Brown	Doug Kereliuk
Tanya Cuffe	Tara Leis
Treena Dixon	Brad Vonkeman

**The Ukrainian Displaced Persons Planning Committee**

Father Jim Nakonechny, Chair	Alla Mysko-Henke
Burton Bailey	Craig Nykyforuk
Emily Berg	Oksana Oliinyk
Cheryl Deagle	Vasyl Oliinyk
Gerda Groothuizen	Daria Savchuk
Audrey Gross	Maria Serrano
Olena Karachentseva	Vitalii Varvaruk
Oksana McIntyre	

**Mayor's Special Award 2023**

The highest honour given by The City of Red Deer, the Mayor's Special Award recognizes individuals and groups for humanitarianism, exceptional achievement, or an act of heroism or bravery.

**Halima Ali**

Halima Ali has dedicated her career and life to supporting immigrant and refugee women and their families. As the Executive Director of the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association, her passion for empowering immigrant communities is easy to see. Originally from Somalia, Halima has introduced several new programs in Red Deer aimed at helping integrate immigrants into their new community.

Halima's contributions to the community have been widely recognized. She was previously honored as one of Red Deer's Women of Excellence, acknowledging her outstanding commitment and leadership. In addition to her role as Executive Director, Halima has actively volunteered as a board member for various organizations, including the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women, Central Alberta Diversity Association, Alberta Health Advisory Council, and Community Capital. Her dedication and impact have been further acknowledged through the receipt of the prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022.

Halima's work ethic, perseverance, resilience, leadership and inspiration have made her an invaluable force in supporting hundreds of immigrant women and their families. Through her unwavering commitment and dedication, she continues to make a positive difference in the lives of those seeking to build a new life in central Alberta.

**Maggie Loney** (posthumous)

Maggie Loney, also known as Turtle Woman, was a remarkable Indigenous Elder and humanitarian whose accomplishments and contributions left a lasting impact on the community. As a Cree woman and Sixties Scoop survivor, Maggie's experiences shaped her into a compassionate and caring individual.

Maggie dedicated herself to educating others about Indigenous knowledge and fostering understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. She generously shared her wisdom at local schools, community events and through her involvement with various organizations. From her role on The City of Red Deer's Systems Leadership Team to her contributions to the Urban Aboriginal Voices Society and the Remembering the Children Society, Maggie played an instrumental role in promoting reconciliation and creating positive change.

Maggie's approach to fostering change was rooted in non-judgmental practices, open sharing of Indigenous culture and history, and consistent actions of kindness and generosity. She embraced people from all walks of life and served as a grandmother, auntie, and friend to those who needed encouragement and support.

Sadly, Maggie's passing in December 2022 marked the end of a life dedicated to making a difference and promoting understanding and respect within the community. Her legacy will continue to inspire and influence us all for years to come.

**Irene Tomlinson**

Irene Tomlinson may soon become known as the Guardian of the Golden West Industrial Area.

She has been an integral part of Border Paving for 11 years, serving as the company's security officer for the past seven. With a keen eye and unwavering dedication, Irene diligently monitors properties and keeps a watchful eye on the entire neighborhood. Her presence and commitment have earned her the trust and respect of neighboring business owners who rely on her vigilance to maintain a safe and secure environment.

Irene's contributions extend far beyond her role as a security officer. Her actions have directly impacted and saved lives. In times of crisis, she has stepped forward without hesitation. Whether it was responding to a motorcycle accident and providing life-saving CPR until paramedics arrived, tipping off the police about the location of a long sought-after vehicle, assisting someone in a mental health crisis, helping a person struck by a car, or thwarting a significant theft of valuable copper wiring, Irene's humility shines through.

Despite her remarkable achievements, Irene does not seek recognition but rather finds fulfillment in making a difference in the lives of both individuals who may be heading down the wrong path and the hardworking businesspeople who have invested their blood, sweat and tears into their businesses. Irene's selfless dedication truly speaks volumes about her character and the profound impact she has on the community.