

'A group of first-class people'

Surrey Fire Fighters' Charitable Society

Surrey firefighters have earned their hero stripes for not only saving lives and property, but also for going above and beyond the call of duty – raising millions of dollars for community programs for nearly 20 years.

In 1994, then-Surrey Firefighters' Association president Lorne West was dismayed to witness poverty firsthand: kids living in squalor and others going to school hungry.

It was West's vision to start the Surrey Fire Fighters' Charitable Society (SFCS) as a way to raise funds for non-profit organizations that support the city's most vulnerable citizens.

And while West has long since moved on from his Surrey post, taking a job with the International Association of Fire Fighters, the SFCS continues to gain momentum with each passing year.

Millions of dollars have been raised by Surrey firefighters since the charitable society's inception, with the money being dispersed to more than 40 Surrey-based non-profit organizations each year.

"Probably our greatest ability is the fact we have a workforce of men and women who are willing to go out into the community and volunteer their time," says SFCS President Mike McNamara. "There is a large public trust with firefighters. People know their money is going to be spent ethically in the community."

Among the SFCS's annual fundraising campaigns are a charity golf tournament, the Mayor's Charity Ball and a boot drive that benefits the B.C. Professional Fire Fighters Burn Fund and Muscular Dystrophy Canada. Many of Surrey's approximately 400 professional firefighters also donate a portion of their earnings to the SFCS through the Members Payroll Deductions program.

SFCS directors Terry Hunt and Todd Schierling are the engine of the organization. McNamara extols their virtues.

"Terry's got the greater good in his mind and he doesn't stop. He's got a great moral compass and been the driving force of this charity for so many years. Todd is very similar. Things just seem to work efficiently when he is at the helm."

Hunt has organized thousands of events for



Front L to R: Surrey Fire Fighters' Charitable Society President Mike McNamara and Director Todd Schierling, with Surrey firefighters.

the SFCS; meanwhile, Schierling spearheaded the Surrey Firefighters' Goodwill Sr. Girls Basketball Classic – now in its 11th year.

At every tournament, the SFCS hands out several bursaries to players who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service in their community.

Also chief among the SFCS's long list of worthy causes is its school Nutritional Snack Program. For 14 years, firefighters have regularly delivered nutritious food items to thousands of children in the Surrey School District.

"When we are dropping off food for schools you can tell they appreciate what the firefighters are doing," says McNamara. "It gives the kids some food and energy in the morning and gets them going for the day."

The Centre for Child Development in Surrey has also been the beneficiary of the SFCS's fundraising efforts, receiving \$125,000 to date.

Judy Krawchuk, Child Development Foundation of B.C. vice-president of group events and campaigns, says the SFCS is one of their longest fundraising partners.

Surrey firefighters have come out in full force for The Centre's Run, Walk and Roll for our Kids event for the past 11 years.

Most recently, the SFCS donated hundreds of volunteer hours to spruce up Sophie's Place (located at The Centre for Child Development), the first child advocacy centre in B.C. that provides support to children who have been

physically, sexually or mentally abused.

"The Surrey firefighters have been supporting The Centre in one way or the other for over 50 years and we thank them for their long-standing support," says Krawchuk.

The SFCS has also contributed in a large way to health care, donating \$150,000 to the Jim Pattison Outpatient Centre; \$1 million to the Children's Health Centre; and \$2 million to the B.C. Professional Fire Fighters Association Burn Unit at Vancouver General Hospital.

Surrey Food Bank Executive Director Marilyn Herrmann sings the praises of the SFCS.

Since 2003 the firefighters have donated more than \$68,500 to the food bank, and have provided countless volunteer hours throughout its 30-year history in the community.

Fire halls are used as a collection point for the community to drop off food donations, especially during the Christmas season. Often the firefighters deliver the donations by fire truck, saving the food bank the expense of sending their truck to the various halls.

"Surrey firefighters are a group of first-class people who really care about their community in so many different ways," says Herrmann. "There is not a charitable organization in our city that has not been helped or touched by their generous support. They so deserve this special Community Leader Award."

"You can learn a lot from volunteering and you start appreciating things more."

– Manny Dhaliwal, 2007 CLA winner, Community Volunteer

TENTH ANNUAL **2012 COMMUNITY LEADER AWARDS**

LEADER of the YEAR 2012 AWARD RECIPIENTS

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L to R: On behalf of Community Savings Doug Eveneshen, together with Jim Mihaly - The Surrey-North Delta Leader, present the 2012 Leader of the Year Award to Eliza Olson.

LEADER of the DECADE

PRESENTED BY **THE SURREY-NORTH DELTA LEADER AND THE COMMUNITY LEADER AWARD PARTNERS**

2012 AWARD RECIPIENTS



Jim Mihaly - The Surrey-North Delta Leader, and Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts present the 2012 Leader of the Decade Award to Todd Schierling (left) and Mike McNamara of the Surrey Fire Fighters' Charitable Society.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF OUR COMMUNITY - IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMITMENT

Locations:

- City Centre:**
604-598-7420
- Cloverdale:**
604-598-7320
- Fleetwood:**
604-598-7340
- Guildford:**
604-598-7360
- Newton:**
604-598-7400
- Ocean Park:**
604-502-6304
- Port Kells:**
604-598-7440
- Semiahmo:**
604-592-6900
- Strawberry Hill:**
604-501-5836



Congratulations to all the nominees!



www.surreylibraries.ca

Thank You
to all our...

Community Leaders



Jeff Enger
Fleetwood



Colleen Keller
Newton



Rob Epp
Nordel



Jas Athwal
Scottsdale

save on foods
BC's very own



Fleetwood
9014 - 152nd St., Surrey

Nordel Crossing
12130 Nordel Way, Surrey

Scottsdale Centre
7015 - 120 St., Delta

Centre of Newton
7320 King George Blvd., Surrey

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL NOMINEES!

Surrey Hospice Society continues to provide excellent services to the Community of Surrey, for over 25 years!

Surrey Hospice Society holds events throughout the year honouring loved ones, and fundraisers to support programs and services. Dedicated volunteers are recruited and trained by the Society and they provide social, emotional and spiritual support for individuals and their loved ones at Laurel Place Hospice, the Tertiary Palliative Care Unit at Surrey Memorial Hospital and in the Community. Surrey Hospice Society in partnership with the Surrey Fire Fighters Associations has a Community Thrift Store located at 7138 King George Boulevard Surrey.

We believe no one should face a life limiting illness alone, and no one should be alone with their grief. The Surrey Hospice Society relies on donations to provide these vital services free of charge to residents in the Community of Surrey. Please consider donating funds or your time to support Surrey Hospice Society.



For more information call **604-543-7006** or www.surreyhospice.com



Surrey Hospice Society

www.surreyhospice.com