

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Announces 2016 Citizen of the Year

February 22, 2017, Hamilton, ON - The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce has announced Josie Rudderham and Nicole Miller of Cake and Loaf Bakery as the 2016 Royal Bank of Canada Citizens of the Year. This award recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to the Hamilton community and who have brought outstanding and remarkable attention to the Hamilton community beyond our municipal borders. The winners will be honoured at a ceremony on February 28th at the RBG Rock Garden.

Meeting in bakery apprentice class, both Josie and Nickey found common ground with a shared passion and hometown of Hamilton. Being genuinely passionate about food and sustainability also focused their business concept. When everything aligned, they created a Kirkendall neighbourhood hub – Cake and Loaf Bakery.

Through their leadership, Josie and Nickey have helped lead a national dialogue about the importance of decent work and living wages. In a sector in which it is traditionally challenging to pay employees a living wage, Josie and Nickey bucked the trend, took a chance and led by example – bringing all of their employees up to Hamilton’s living wage level. They have shared their experiences as living wage employers with Hamilton City Councilors, in national media, through video presentations and as part of panel discussions.

Also in 2016, Cake and Loaf Bakery took home first prize in the Small Business Challenge contest, sponsored by The Globe and Mail and Telus Corp., beating out more than 3,300 entries. Not only did they receive \$100,000 for business expansion, but also received \$10,000 to donate to their favourite charity, choosing Food4Kids Hamilton.

Beyond their commitment to living wage and business excellence, Josie and Nickey work hard to better their community. This past December, Cake and Loaf put on a successful community festival “Lights of Dundurn”, which featured entertainment, a maker’s market and holiday goodies. Part of proceeds from the event went to sponsor a Syrian refugee family. Recently, Cake and Loaf has also created special sugar cookies to support Canadian Blood Services- with each purchase of these cookies, a donation is made to the organization.

"With a lot of hard work, in just a few short years Josie and Nickey have made a tremendous impact in Hamilton and its local business culture," explains Keanin Loomis, President and CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. "Their two stores have become neighborhood destinations and they've become exemplars for how to treat their employees and build community around a brand. Now that they've achieved recognition locally and beyond, they are rightfully being honored for the expanding social impact that has become such a driving force behind their success."

Marybeth Leis and Jeff Druery were also nominated for the distinction. Marybeth and Jeff founded “Student Open Circles” in 2001. Student Open Circles coordinates over 300 McMaster students in weekly volunteering groups throughout the city, collectively giving 10,000 volunteer hours each year to serve at homeless shelters, as mentors for at risk youth, children's tutoring, and with adults with disabilities.

The Hamilton Spectator Youth Volunteer of the Year honour will also be awarded on the evening of the 28th. This award recognizes an individual 19 years of age or under whose extraordinary volunteer activities have made a difference in the Hamilton community and/or the organization in which they are involved. The winner will also receive a \$500 bursary. The 2016 winner is Deeksha Polamreddy, a Grade 12 at Westdale Secondary School.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the Royal Bank of Canada and the Hamilton Spectator for their continued support of this event.

About the Citizen of the Year Awards

The honour dates back to 1938, when the Hamilton Advertising & Sales Club began the tradition. Over the next 60 years they cared for it as few others would or could. In 1997, however, the Club found it necessary to cease operations, but those who remained wanted to be sure that the Citizen of the Year Awards continued. They approached The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, which already held ownership of the same program in Ancaster and Dundas, and asked that it consider accepting responsibility for the program, effective 1999. With the help of the Royal Bank and The Hamilton Spectator, the Chamber agreed to do so. On behalf of a grateful community, the Hamilton Chamber thanks all Ad & Sales Club Members, who, for 60 years, contributed to making what is today the community's premier event saluting citizenship and volunteerism. Past notable winners include Ron Foxcroft, Colin Millar, and the Honourable Lincoln Alexander.

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