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2023 FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN ONTARIO HALL OF FAME AND VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Provincial organization recognizes festival industry volunteers and leaders

Niagara Falls, Ontario (March 8, 2023) Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) is proud to announce the new inductee to the FEO Hall of Fame, as well as the 2023 FEO Volunteer of the Year Awards. FEO believes it is important to recognize significant contributions of these individuals to the festival and event industry – without their passion and dedication, this industry could not survive. The Hall of Fame and Volunteer of the Year Awards were handed out on Wednesday, March 8th during FEO's Annual Conference "CELEBRATE" in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Since 2000, FEO has now inducted 47 people into its Hall of Fame representing festivals, municipalities, organizations and events from across the province. Each individual named to the FEO Hall of Fame is someone who has dedicated their career to the festival and event industry and who has made a lasting contribution to their community, festival, event or organization.

FEO would like to congratulate the following 2023 Inductee.

Joanne Robbins – Port Elgin Pumpkinfest

Joanne has played a key role in the festival industry for over 30 years and has helped to grow Pumpkinfest from 10,000 attendees in the early years, to more than 50,000 annual visitors to the small town of Port Elgin

Joanne helped to develop the first Special Event Resource centre in the Province 24 years ago and obtained a grant to build an inventory and a facility capable of signing out event equipment to over 50 events a year. Events across the Province can obtain resources such as training, signage, games, PA Speakers and so much more.

Another innovative impact that Joanne has had on the community is ability to get non-profit groups to participate in Pumpkinfest. Her passion for the event has helped her convince high school teams, Rotarians, Girl Guides, Air Cadets and the local church to take on various jobs at the festival.

Joanne tends to stay in the background...making sure her board and volunteers get all the credit...but without her experience and positive attitude, Pumpkinfest would never have grown to the heights it has...especially during the pandemic



FEO maintains that the importance of volunteers to the festivals and events industry cannot be undervalued. FEO's commitment to the festivals and events industry is strengthened by recognizing the volunteers who have distinguished themselves by virtue of their service to their community through significant involvement with festivals or events.

FEO would like to congratulate the following **2023 Volunteer Winners**.

Family Volunteer of the Year

The Kulesza Family – Carrousel of the Nations

Youth Volunteer of the Year

Emily Shields – Niagara Falls Winter Festival of Lights

Dhanvi Patel – Niagara Falls Winter Festival of Lights

Volunteer of the Year

Sean Chase – Paris Fair

The “CELEBRATE” 2023 Festivals & Events Ontario Conference was held in Niagara Falls, Ontario from March 6-8, 2023.

- 30 -

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About Festivals & Events Ontario

Festivals & Events Ontario (FEO) was established in 1987 as an association devoted to the growth and stability of the festival and event industry in Ontario. FEO supports a lively, engaged and dedicated festival and events industry by sharing knowledge, enabling networking and providing leadership on education, advocacy and promotion. FEO operates Canada's largest dedicated festival and event Conference, publishes and distributes an annual consumer guide, promotes its industry festival supplier goods and services and oversees an industry-leading awards recognition program. The festivals and events industry in Ontario is estimated to generate in excess of \$2.3 billion annually in contribution to regional GDP, create/sustain approximately 50,000 full-year-equivalent jobs and foster approximately \$1 billion dollars in taxes at all levels of government.