

Kin Canada Honours Volunteer

(reposted from [The Prince George Citizen](#), Christine Hinzmann)

Thanks for all you do!

Mike McGuire



Mike McGuire has volunteered with Kin Canada since 1984 and recently received was honoured with the designation of a Life Member of Kin Canada because of his dedication to the Prince George Kinsmen Club and community at large

It's a funny story and who better to live it than a stand-up comedian who got his start and developed his comedic talent through his extensive volunteerism. Mike McGuire started volunteering with the Kin of Canada in 1984 in Prince Rupert. "I was new to town and I didn't know anybody and the best way to get involved in the community is to meet people," McGuire said. "Since then it's been what I do." Kin Canada is the country's biggest all-Canadian service club organization. He joined the Kinsmen Club of Prince George when he moved back to town in 1989. "For any member it's how much you can give," McGuire said. "And I don't have a lot else going in my life so I can volunteer as much as I want. So from organizing events to selling raffle tickets to recruiting members and we administer that hall (The Kinsmen Complex) on our own so sometimes you're just sweeping floors or setting up tables – so nothing cool or fun but just being involved."

An hour a week, or an hour a month, whatever a volunteer can offer the Kin Club is welcome, McGuire said, who puts in about 10 hours a week. Over the years the rest of the club members have developed into friends, McGuire added. "So you don't really want to let them down," McGuire said. "You want to be out there and you want to help. As a club last year we grew from four to 14. As a four-member club the slogging was tough", he added. "All of a sudden we started growing and that's a relief," McGuire said.

With the pressure off, McGuire took on the additional role of governor for B.C., which consists of 40 clubs, and duties include communicating with the national club and disseminating information, and making sure everyone's dues are paid. "I make sure all the biddily bits are looked after," McGuire said. Stand Up for Charity is a dinner and a show event hosted by the local Kin Club. "We're going to be doing our 20th event on Sept. 30," McGuire said.

Oddly enough, the event was not McGuire's brainchild. "A former member said we had to do something fun to show people we're not all business and he said what about a comedy show," McGuire said. "Everybody jumped on and it just went from there." McGuire took over about show number four when they were looking to make it bigger. Amateur local comedians were included on the show's roster. To decide who would be part of the show, there was a showcase of talent at a different venue. When there was a callout nobody responded, so McGuire threw his hat into the ring, and of course Prince George being the last minute town there were about seven people that ended up in the showcase. "That exposed me to the comedy community here and from there I got invited to do other amateur shows with the other comedians and it just went from there," McGuire said.

During one of the early shows, Vancouver comedian Toby Hargrave was featured and when McGuire got to chatting with him Hargrave told him that if he was ever in Vancouver that he could get him in an amateur show on stage there. "And then I was hooked, right?" McGuire said. Bookings were through Yuk Yuks and he went down to Vancouver and saw professional comedian Erica Sigurdson. After the show he asked her if she'd come to Prince George to perform. That led to McGuire doing the bookings for the show himself and getting to know the comedic community in B.C. very well.

As McGuire's volunteerism grew into the entertainment sector, so did his

career as a stand up comedian. He has recently been cast to be part of the Debaters that will be taping in Prince George next Tuesday, a project he spearheaded when he launched a Facebook page called Let's Bring CBC's The Debaters to PG last June and got the producer's attention. "You want to talk about a Canadian resume for comics?" McGuire said. "The Debaters has to be on it. As a volunteer it opens you up to so many possibilities. It's crazy. You know you put yourself out there and you just don't know where it's going to take you. My public speaking ability is because of Kinsmen, my comedy is because of Kinsmen and you look at all these things and it's all because of Kinsmen." McGuire will be in a 27-minute debate against a guest comic during the show about which is better – Prince George the city or Prince George the person.

McGuire's volunteerism doesn't stop at the Kin Club. He spent six years on the board of the Friends of Children board. The non-profit society helps with travel, accommodations and meal costs associated with out of town expenses when families must leave Prince George to seek treatment for their ailing children. He also volunteers with the BCNF, the BC Neurofibromatosis Foundation and what McGuire calls the tumor foundation, because his nephew has the condition. So McGuire's efforts are inspired by him. Through Kin Canada McGuire has been acknowledged in the past for his volunteer efforts with Cystic Fibrosis Canada.

McGuire is on the board of the Kinsmen Foundation where the goal is to assist adults with mobility issues. Most recently McGuire was surprised with the honour of being designated as a Life Member of Kin Canada because of his dedication to the Prince George Kinsmen Club and community at large. "It was humbling," McGuire said, whose family came from all over Canada to attend the event that was held in his honour recently. "The people I meet who are Kinsmen are not there to fill their pockets, they are there to fill their hearts."

For more volunteer positions, please visit our [volunteer](#)

directory!

Youth Volunteer Spotlight – Jesmeen

Jesmeen

In her 4 years volunteering with the Canadian Cancer Society, Jesmeen has consistently demonstrated initiative, dedication and commitment to furthering the Society's vision for a future without cancer. Jesmeen supported the design, implementation and evaluation of a project aimed at supporting youth to make healthier choices. She volunteered at the Relay For Life, and also organized the Daffodil campaign at College Heights Secondary. Most recently, Jesmeen initiated and organized a display at her school, educating youth about tobacco and e-cigarettes and support advocacy priorities that will make healthy choices easier for all British Columbians.

Why I Volunteer – Barb

Why I Volunteer – Barb

I began volunteering when my children were little, helping with their activities. But when the children left home, I felt bored. I heard about the Canadian Cancer Society. and I thought "that sounds interesting." In 1989, I began working at reception.

In 2001, I was diagnosed with esophageal cancer, even though I had none of the risk factors. After I took some time off to recover, I returned with a new perspective. I began helping with the Emergency Aid Program. I loved this role –being able to hear people's stories, and show them that somebody cared by helping with practical support, was so rewarding.

In 2005, I became involved with CancerConnection, supporting people by telephone who have been diagnosed with cancer. I had the privilege of talking to people as far away as Ontario, and being one more layer of

support for them in their cancer journey. I could really understand their challenges, and often, I would just listen.

I travel quite a bit – I've done walking tours in France, and ridden a camel in Egypt! Often the people that I talk with would say how much hope it gives them to know that there is life – and a good life – after cancer.

I get so much out of volunteering. Sometimes, if I'm feeling sorry for myself – I talk to others and it puts all my problems in perspective.

Youth Volunteer Spotlight – College Heights Students

These young people from College Heights Secondary School were honoured recently with Youth Volunteer Awards from Volunteer PG – for their voluntary contributions in Prince George. Hats off to Leadership class teacher, Cindy Smith for her hearty enthusiasm and support.

Youth Volunteer Spotlight – Cole

Cole Category: 12 & under

Cole was very helpful in our neighbourhood with a Random Act of Service. He unplugged the city drain on his street to make all the neighbours happy and save the City some money! Without being asked...

Why I Volunteer – Ken

When I was very young I began volunteering with a youth oriented group, the [Canadian Cadet Organizations](#). I wanted to go to sea. That started in 1981, in Northern BC. I needed the self-discipline that that organization provided; I stayed with that group for 22 years until adulthood amid a

turbulent dysfunctional life. My main employment outside of volunteering was with the [British Columbia Forest Service](#), in Forest Protection and Inventory. The last job for them before my health started to change was in the beginning of the Mountain Pine Beetle explosion in the mid to late 1980's. After a year resting as my health got better, I returned to the Bug project in 1990 with a contractor and injured myself. I could not continue in that line of work. I still volunteered.

In 2000, I was diagnosed with [Multiple Sclerosis](#) & had to drop Cadets a couple of years later retired from a job as a computer technician at [London Drugs](#) in 2002. I took care of some [mental health issues](#) and faced life alone with a disability in the city of Prince George. It was difficult at first, I survived thanks learning all we really need is to have food, shelter and companionship secured. Life is a triangle of support. To that end I needed to keep busy for survival once I secured a home and food. In late 2003, I began volunteering for the [Handy Circle Resources Society](#) through an umbrella society concerned with developing accessible housing in Prince George. They began to pay me a small wage in 2012. My most high profile role for them today is networking, facilitating the StopGap Ramp Program for Prince George, being their volunteer Emcee and preparing Presentations. In 2005 I became Volunteer Facilitator for the [MS Community in Prince George](#). I became the voice of MS in Prince George in the absence of a live group. While aging in this city, I began volunteering with the PG Council of Seniors first in late 2003 as a volunteer instructor then as a board member beginning about 2010. Late 2006 introduced me to the [Patient Voices Network](#), by 2007 I was an Activated Patient.

Also in 2007 I started volunteering for the City of Prince George with the [Advisory Committee on Accessibility](#) and became community liaison for "Measuring up the North", an initiative for Northern BC to become accessible. It's now known as "Access 2024". In 2016 and 2017 I returned to the Advisory Committee. Through these volunteer positions, I began officially connecting to and volunteering with / for other local, provincial and national groups and have joined many other groups concerned with housing, accessibility, advocacy, regional health and successful aging. In 2008 we re-formed the Prince George Power Mobility Society which is concerned with safe enjoyment of Power Mobility devices. It's struggling at present but we have high hopes. In 2016 I became the Volunteer Web Designer for [Volunteer Prince George](#). I also design the

[Carefree Society's website](#), through them I will return to [Make a Change Canada's IBDE program](#) to make improvements on the design I created for Carefree in 2016 and perhaps jump start a business project I have. Thank you for recognizing me in all the hats I wear. Onward to futures best left to the imagination and hopefully realized! I suppose the best reason for why I volunteer is to keep my sanity. Disability was hard on my brain, and keeping it busy keeps me healthy, as far as society is concerned anyway.

Since first posting of this writing of me, I have taken further education thanks to combined efforts of the Carefree Transportation Society (who have a [WordPress Blog now behind their blog](#), desperately in need of a blog writer), Stakeholders and Supporters behind Make A Change Canada I completed the [IBDE Training](#) (taking upgrading now for a month, learning about [BootStrap Framework software](#)) I had started so long ago. I also began a journey to develop a business plan towards a use for my 5 year website at [walknroll.info](#) and beyond. Stay tuned and subscribe there to see all my posts and who I become!

Youth Volunteer Awards Spotlight – Carl

Carl

Carl is both a member and leader in our Random Acts of Kindness (REACH) volunteer group at PGSS. He attends weekly lunch meetings, and he inspires our junior members with ideas for kindness. His writing covers our white board and our younger members follow his strength and courage as they gain confidence! He presents our gifts of kindness or gratitude to students and teachers with quiet humility and eloquence. Daily, he adds ideas to our list of people who could use help or recognition. He buys gifts on his own time and out of pocket. He started our Pay-it-Forward Tim Horton's gift card activity, and he made sure a young hockey teammate and friend whose father died of brain cancer in December received notes and a gift card from our group.

Youth Volunteer Award – Caden

Caden

Category: 13-16

Caden is relatively new to volunteerism. Caden volunteers with the Prince George Cougars, he is one of close to 200 volunteering at all 35 games, and loves every minute of it.

Why I Volunteer – Rod

Why I Volunteer – Rod Mulligan

I began volunteering after a career of teaching at the high school level. It was a natural transition into helping others. After retiring early because of a disability, MS, I continued helping in the community wherever I could. A lifetime of teaching qualified me to help adult learners at the **Native Friendship Centre in the Literacy** program. I also volunteer at the information desk at **University Hospital of Northern BC**, telling the public where to go and how to get there (politely, of course!). Further, I volunteer with **Community Policing** on the Friendly Phone program, a service which provides daily contact and monitoring of a portion of the population who might otherwise have no contact with the outside world. **It is a valuable service and very gratifying.** That takes care of my work week, so I take Sunday off!

Volunteer Spotlight – Gary

If you've never visited the CNIB Prince George office, you really should. It's run by a small, dedicated, close-knit team of staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to provide services to the vast region of Northern BC.

One of those dedicated volunteers is Gary.

Gary has held many volunteer positions with CNIB since 2003. He started out by performing general office duties such as answering calls, photocopying and phoning clients for about service days. He has since taken on many more CNIB roles – he’s a peer mentor, a fundraiser, a board member, a peer support group facilitator and a translator for our Punjabi clients.

Our Executive Director, John Mulka, sums up the importance of Gary’s contributions: “Gary makes a huge impact by volunteering countless hours in our Northern BC region. He works closely with our small staff team providing excellent administrative support and, in fact, sometimes he’s the one keeping the office doors open when staff are unavailable; we can count on Gary to hold down the fort.”

Gary chooses to give back to CNIB by supporting others who are adjusting to vision loss because of his own experience with losing his vision in 1998.

“I lost my eyesight overnight and it was a sudden shock to wake up blind,” says Gary. “CNIB has helped me tremendously by giving me the practical and emotional support I needed to move forward. They have been there for me when I needed them. I am extremely independent today because of their support and ongoing help throughout the years.”

Recently, Gary participated in the first annual CNIB Night Steps event in Prince George. CNIB is extremely proud of Gary’s efforts as a participant; his hard work raising funds on behalf of CNIB were nothing short of remarkable. As the top fundraiser for the event, Gary raised over \$5,000. These valuable funds will directly benefit programs and services in Northern BC. Gary is already looking forward to Night Steps 2016 and we hope others will join him to ‘brighten the night’ for those who are blind or partially sighted

Sharon Pratt

Specialist Service Coordination& Volunteer Services

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