



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Impact Sector Day of Recognition honours Invisible Champions and non-profit sector

Event to include proclamation from province

(HALIFAX/KJIPUKTUK – April 29, 2022) A special event this afternoon will recognize the important work happening in the nonprofit sector. The Community Impact Sector Day of Recognition shines a light on the 20,000 people who work in the sector across the province, and the hundreds of thousands of lives they impact each day.

The event is co-led by IONS, United Way, the Bhayana Family Foundation and the Province of Nova Scotia. Artists and performers at the event will help demonstrate community impact through art, poetry and song.

Annika Voltan is the executive director of IONS. She notes the often-invisible work of the Community Impact Sector represents some of the most important contributions to our province's collective wellbeing and to our quality of life. "A passionate, highly-skilled workforce delivers essential programs and services to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to basic necessities and community support," says Voltan. "Despite its impact, the sector is often overlooked and undervalued. Recognizing and celebrating this day is part of the larger approach in building momentum and transforming the narrative of the Community Impact Sector."

Part of that celebration will include 15 individuals and five organizations who will be recognized with Invisible Champion Awards. These award winners have gone above and beyond for their community, demonstrating creativity, adaptability, tenacity and compassion. The award includes \$1,000 for each winner to use for professional or personal development, to help them continue their great work.

Raksha M. Bhayana is CEO of the Bhayana Family Foundation, which founded the Invisible Champion Awards in partnership with United Way. This Foundation has advocated for provincial days of recognition for the sector and is working on the creation of a national day of recognition for Canada. "There needs to be more recognition and respect for the value the sector provides," says Bhayana. "As a society we should appreciate those who help people as much as those who sell products and services. This day in Nova Scotia is a huge step forward."

The event will also include a proclamation from the Honorable Barbara Adams, Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care. "Non-profit sector organizations play an essential role in our thriving, healthy communities," says Minister Adams. "The Day of Recognition is just one way to express our gratitude to the more than 20,000 Nova Scotia non-profit sector employees who help enrich the lives of so many, every day."

United Way Halifax, IONS and the Bhayana Family Foundation recognize the support of the Province of Nova Scotia. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to develop and promote our cultural resources for all Nova Scotians.

United Way Halifax brings donors, volunteers and partners together to create lasting social change. We provide funding, lead projects, and advocate for change – all with the goal of building a more inclusive community that is free of poverty. United Way Halifax works in close partnership with five other United Ways across Nova Scotia – all community-based, we strive to make meaningful change together.

Incorporated in 2006, the Bhayana Family Foundation partners with United Ways and Provincial Nonprofit Associations and Governments across Canada to close the recognition gap for the Nonprofit sector. The United Way/Bhayana Family Foundation Invisible Champion Awards are multi-dimensional, and honour staff in the areas of Leadership, Innovation, Dedication, Partnership, Community Building and Team Achievement.

Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia (IONS) helps build a better world by recognizing the importance of a more just, equitable, and community-driven approach to re-envisioning our society. As a Community Impact Sector advocate, IONS supports, connects, builds capacity for, and amplifies the shared voice and work of the sector. Visit ions.ca to learn more.

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2022 Invisible Champion Award Winners

Individuals

Abigail Collins

Family Intensive Case Manager and Live-In Support at Phoenix Youth

Belinda LeBlanc

Launch Atlantic Team Lead at YWCA Halifax

Colter Simmonds

Founder & CEO at We Will Win Youth

Debra Paris Perry

Peer Outreach Worker at YWCA Halifax

Donna Poirier

Senior Trustee at Shelter Nova Scotia

Elizabeth Chute

Rider and Volunteer Care Coordinator/Primary Dispatcher at Sou'West Nova Transit

Greg Martell

Chief Thankfulness Officer at Soul's Harbour Rescue Mission

Kaleigh Smith

Abundance Program Coordinator at Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia

Krista Watts

Supervisor at Metro Community Housing Association

Laurel Taylor

Team Lead – Project Hope at Canadian Mental Health Association

Lori Edgar

Director of Operations at Affirmative Ventures

Marg MacIntosh

Office Coordinator at CHAD Transit

Preston Simmonds

YMCA of Halifax/Dartmouth

Rob Casey

Program Coordinator, Career Link at TEAM Work Cooperative

Shaleen Jones

Executive Director at Eating Disorders Nova Scotia

Organizations

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County

DASC – Dartmouth Adult Services Centre

New Dawn Meals on Wheels/A Better Bite Community Kitchen

Our Health Centre

Shelter Movers

Photos of the winners may be available upon request