

Cathy Kelly selected for volunteer award

By Rebecca Ring, The New Tanner

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Rockwood's Cathy Kelly is the embodiment of community spirit. After years of devoting time, energy and even funds to the community, Guelph/Eramosa Council unanimously agreed that she should represent the Township for a County of Wellington Volunteer Appreciation Award. The award program, a collaboration of the Volunteer Centre of Guelph-Wellington and County Wellington, recognizes and honours the significant contributions of individuals who volunteer their time and effort to their communities and organizations. One volunteer (or group) is chosen by each of the municipalities within the County to receive the award. The ceremony will take place at the regular meeting of County Council on April 30.

"Cathy is real champion of the community," says Mayor Chris White, "This award has been a long time coming and is well deserved. It's a small token of our appreciation for all the good stuff she does in the Township, from which we all reap the rewards."

Kelly attributes her desire to help others to her mother, Cora Penny. Born and raised in Newfoundland, where her mother still lives, Kelly watched and learned from her mother's commitment to the community, where she is still very active at 76 years of age. Kelly learned that when volunteering, everything is appreciated, whether it is time or money, no matter how small.

Kelly moved to Rockwood nine years ago from Mississauga. She fell in love with the village when she and her family were camping in the Conservation Area. She and husband Danny decided it was a great community in which to raise their two boys, Steven and Joshua. Just prior to the move, she started a home-based window treatment and home accessory business, CK Coverings, and took a chance that it would flourish in a small town. Flourish it did, and she is about to celebrate ten years in business this September.

Kelly attributes her success to "getting out there" in the community. She is a very active member of the Rockwood Eramosa Business Association and has organized its Christmas tree lighting at Lions Waterside Park for three years and a trunk sale to raise funds to purchase flags for the downtown.

She and her family instantly became involved in developing Valentino Park in their neighbourhood, and are instrumental volunteers in building and maintaining its outdoor ice rink. They also work with the Rockwood and District Lions Club in the annual spring clean up, picking up litter to beautify the village.

She has organized community events, including several annual street parties, a winter ice rink fun day for volunteers with a backyard fire and hot chocolate at her home, and door-to-door Christmas caroling on Christmas Eve. Two years ago, she partnered with the "Snow Queen" and hosted caroling in the park to raise funds for Star Light Star Bright Children's Foundation. Last Christmas, she volunteered her professional



talents to decorate a room for the Joy of Christmas Home Tour in support of Jewels for Jesus.

Kelly is very involved in her church, Sacred Heart, and has served as secretary for its council, led the children's liturgy and loves to sing in the choir. She donated funds from her business to sponsor the church's annual Coulson Cup golf tournament fundraiser. She regularly volunteers at her sons' school, St. Patrick's in Guelph, and is very active in the campaign to bring a Catholic school to Rockwood. She also supports Rockwood Centennial School by incorporating a fundraising bake sale in her annual home décor show.

Kelly has been a regular supporter of sports clubs, including serving as past convener of the Rockwood Rockets Soccer Club, now known as the football club, and has served on the executive board. She has sponsored the club and helped to organize a fundraising dance last year. She says this has helped her stay connected and spend time with her children.

Kelly is no slouch when it comes to raising funds for good causes. She has canvassed door-to-door for the Kidney Foundation, runs every year in the Terry Fox Run, and Walks for the Cure for Juvenile Diabetes.

Right now, Kelly is preparing to volunteer her time and talent in presenting workshops in Designing Divas, an all day home décor and design event to raise funds for HopeSpring Cancer Support Centre in Cambridge. It takes place at Jacob Hespeler Secondary School, Cambridge, Saturday, April 4, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"I am honoured to be selected for this award," says Kelly, "But it is not just about me. The way I volunteer allows me to incorporate my family and my business. We do things as a team. I have a very supportive family and we're out there working together, enjoying giving back to the community."