



35TH ANNUAL SPORT VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER



The Office of
MAYOR ANDREA HORWATH
CITY OF HAMILTON

April 23rd, 2026

On behalf of the City of Hamilton, I am pleased to welcome you to the *35th Annual Sport Volunteer Appreciation Dinner*. This milestone marks 35 years of recognizing the individuals whose dedication and leadership have helped build a strong, vibrant sport community in our city.

Tonight is all about you – the athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers who dedicate your time, energy, and passion to sport in Hamilton. Your commitment is the backbone of our local sport community, creating opportunities for young people and strengthening our city for generations to come.

This evening, we celebrate the excellence of individuals nominated by their peers for their outstanding contributions to sport development. Whether on the field, in our neighbourhoods, or behind the scenes, your impact is significant and lasting.

Thank you for your leadership, your commitment, and the difference you make every day. Congratulations on this remarkable 35th anniversary, and enjoy this well-deserved celebration.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrea Horwath". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andrea Horwath
Mayor



Hamilton



City of Hamilton
Healthy and Safe Communities Department
General Managers Office
28 James Street North
Hamilton, Ontario

April 10, 2026

Dear valued City of Hamilton Volunteers,
Welcome to the 35th Annual Sport Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and thank you for being here this evening.

It is truly an honour to recognize the dedication and impact of sport volunteers across our community. Coaches, officials, administrators, and game-day volunteers form the backbone of amateur sport. Because of your commitment, sport in our city continues to grow and thrive.

Recreation and community engagement are essential to foster healthy individuals and strong, connected communities. I deeply appreciate the enthusiasm and care you bring as volunteers, creating meaningful and positive experiences for everyone you support. Your efforts help make Hamilton an exceptional place to grow up and to live well at every stage of life.

Tonight is a celebration of you. I hope you enjoy the evening and feel proud of the incredible difference you make.

With appreciation,

Grace Mater
General Manager
Healthy and Safe Communities Department
City of Hamilton



On behalf of the SportHamilton Board of Directors, it is my honour to welcome so many sport volunteers and special guests to the **35th Annual Sport Volunteer Appreciation Awards**.

SportHamilton has been a working partner with the City of Hamilton, Healthy and Safe Communities- Recreation Division since the inception of these prestigious awards. These awards recognize and celebrate the long-standing volunteer contribution and outstanding achievements of so many Hamilton community individuals in sport.

Congratulations to all the award recipients on this well-deserved honour. You have made a significant difference in the lives of so many. Your leadership, knowledge and generosity have greatly contributed to the success of the many diverse sport programs offered throughout the community and you are seen and appreciated.

All sport and recreation programs strive to provide a quality experience for all those who choose to participate. In addition, these organizations strive to develop excellence in sport and movement skills while building everyone's confidence to motivate them to continue to participate in sport, develop personal fitness, health and wellness all the while having fun and building friendships.

Thank you to the volunteers who make this happen. Special thanks to City of Hamilton Recreation Department for coordinating this evenings' celebration under the leadership of Steve Sevor and his staff and especially Ron Scott, for bringing everyone together and honoring their volunteerism.

Sincerely Yours in Sport,

Helen Downey
President SportHamilton

www.sporthamilton.com

SPORT SERVICES TEAM & EVENT COMMITTEE

The Sport Services team is proud to work alongside our dedicated sport organizations, striving to foster growth, development, and excellence in local athletics. Through collaboration and shared goals, we are able to enhance the experience for athletes and support the success of our programs. Together, we're building stronger, more vibrant sports communities.

Sport Services Team:

Director of Recreation: Steve Sevor
Sport Specialists: Gordon Young, Mackenzie Copeland, Mike Savoy
Sport Event Specialist: Ron Scott

Sport Volunteer Event Committee:

Ron Scott, Gordon Young, Mike Savoy, Kelly Jones, Mandy Dhaliwal, Tim Alblas, Eric McLoughlin and Michaela Bazinet

PARTNERS



Soundbox



CHRISTINA DE MELO
VIDEO » PHOTO » DESIGN

GOLF IN HAMILTON

Affordable rates of play.

Learn more at: hamilton.ca/Golf



GREETINGS

Welcome by
Rick Zamperin – Emcee



From an early age, Rick Zamperin knew he wanted to be in radio and television. The graduate of Fanshawe College's acclaimed broadcast journalism program spent 24 years at CHML radio in Hamilton where he hosted the morning show, anchored the news, and served as the play-by-play announcer for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. Rick is currently the co-anchor of Morning Live on CHCH TV in Hamilton and hosts the CHCH Newsmakers podcast. Rick also remains the voice of the Ticats.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT & NATIONAL ANTHEM

Greetings from:

Mayor Andrea Horwath Mayor of the City of Hamilton

HAMILTON HERO BANNER INDUCTION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Lindsay Hamilton National Anchor Sportscentre, TSN

AWARDS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

City of Hamilton Distinguished Youth Sport Volunteer **Awards**

Ray Lewis Community Service **Award**

Dr. Gene Sutton Club Excellence **Award**

Dr. Ray Johnson Coach of the Year **Award**

Ron Foxcroft Fair Play **Award**

Distinguished Sport Volunteer **Awards**

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



KEY NOTE SPEAKER

LINDSAY HAMILTON

Lindsay Hamilton is a national anchor for SportsCentre on TSN. You can currently watch her on the weekday morning loop of SportsCentre bringing Canadians from coast to coast their daily sports news.

In addition to SportsCentre, Lindsay regularly contributes to NHL hockey coverage, and some of sports biggest events.

Lindsay has hosted and contributed to a number of marquee events including: the Olympics, the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia, Euro 2024, Stanley Cup Finals, the Masters, Men's World Hockey Championship, CP Women's Open, the Queen's Plate, and Curling Day in Canada.

Prior to TSN, Lindsay started working in broadcasting at a young age, becoming the first host of the Family Channel in 2008. For more than five years she interviewed entertainment icons, athletes, and musicians across North America, including Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez, and One Direction.

Lindsay completed a double major with honours in communications and film at McMaster University while playing varsity lacrosse and competed on Team Ontario. She is passionate about helping others through sport and is a Special Olympics board member.



2026 HAMILTON HERO BANNER INDUCTEE

THERESA BURNS

A standout player at the University of Toronto, Burns started her coaching career at Ryerson University before accepting the head coach position at McMaster. With 36 seasons of joint experience between Ryerson and McMaster, Burns stands as the second-longest-tenured coach in U SPORTS women's basketball behind only her mentor and former coach, University of Toronto's Michèle Bélanger. Burns' career is synonymous with McMaster's rise to national prominence in U SPORTS women's basketball. Since taking over the program in 1992, she amassed more than 600 career victories, led the Marauders to five Ontario University Athletics (OUA) conference titles, and guided McMaster to its first-ever national championship in 2019. In 2023, Burns recorded her 570th career victory, becoming the second-winningest coach in U SPORTS women's basketball history behind only Bélanger, finishing her career with 618 wins. She has been recognized as an OUA Coach of the Year recipient on three occasions and was the National Coach of the Year in 2008.

Burns mentored numerous athletes who went on to professional careers in basketball and coaching, and she played a key role in shaping some of the most decorated players in McMaster history, including:

Sarah Gates - former U SPORTS Players of the Year;

Danielle Boiago – former U SPORTS Player of the year and just recently named an assistant coach with Portland Fire of the WNBA;

Lisa Thomaidis - former Canadian Women's National Team and current University of Saskatchewan head coach;

and **Isabelle Ormond** - who went from player to protégé then successor as the new Head Coach of the McMaster Marauders.

She has been a guest assistant coach with the Canadian Senior National Team, and served most recently as an assistant coach with Team Canada at the 2019 FISU Summer Universiade in Naples, Italy.

PAST HAMILTON HERO BANNER INDUCTEES

Dave Andreychuk	“Rapid Ray” Lewis
David Braley	Joanne Malar
Barb Bunkowsky	Bev Mallory
Dr. John Byl	Irene McDonald
Cecelia Carter-Smith	*Audrey (Dearnly) McLaughlan
Al Craig	Steve Mitruk
Bobby Croft	Al Morrow
Bernie Custis	Angelo Mosca
Sheila Dezeeuw	Murray Oliver
Gordon Dickson	Sue Palmer-Komar
Ryan Ellis	Jack Pelech
Bill Friday	Russ Prior
Ron Foxcroft	Therese Quigley
Chelsea Gotell	Pat Quinn
David Hart	Kimberly Ribble-Orr
Frank Hayden	M.M. Robinson
Geraldine Heaney	Vinnie Ryan
Garney Henley	Paula Schnurr
*Violet (Smith) Hinstead	Billy Scherring
Harry Howell	Glen Sonmor
Cindy Ishoy	*Betty (White) Stanley
Russ Jackson	Dr. Gene Sutton
Dr. Ray Johnson	Melissa Tancredi
Don Knight	Leslie Taylor
Bob Krouse	Jimmy Thompson
Mel LaForme	Joe Young
George Larson	

MAJOR AWARD WINNERS

2026

YOUTH SPORT VOLUNTEER AWARD

2026 Recipient –

Samuel Neiterman and Leighton Underhill

This award is presented to a youth who is heavily involved in volunteering, coaching, officiating or organizing sporting opportunities in Hamilton. This individual displays good sportsmanship, promotes fair play, encourages participation, provides a fun experience for all and represents the Hamilton community with integrity and pride.



Samuel Neiterman



Leighton Underhill



RAY LEWIS ALTHETIC EXCELLENCE & COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

2026 Recipient – John Ross

Presented in the adult category to an outstanding Hamilton athlete who has excelled in sport and has also made a significant contribution to the Hamilton community. Rapid Ray Lewis was a Canadian track and field star in the 1930's, born and raised in Hamilton. He was an Order of Canada recipient in 2001 and passed away in 2003. Ray was a role model and mentor to many students and young athletes throughout his life in sport and his teachings in the Hamilton school system.

DR. GENE SUTTON CLUB EXCELLENCE AWARD

2026 Recipient – Mount Hamilton United Soccer Club

The Dr. Gene Sutton Club Excellence Award was established by the City of Hamilton in 2010 to recognize a model sports or recreation organization that provides quality youth programming, promotes healthy living, exemplifies respect for sport and fair play, and is a role model for youth in the Hamilton community. The award is named after Dr. Gene Sutton who was dedicated to quality amateur sport in Hamilton. Dr. Sutton was an advocate for providing a safe, healthy, and fun environment for youth in sport and encouraged sportsmanship and fair play.





Dr. RAY JOHNSON COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD
2026 Recipient – Derm Tilley

Presented to an individual who best exemplifies the attributes that contribute to quality coaching. Dr. Ray Johnson was an integral part of the Hamilton community. He dedicated many years to sport as a coach and a builder. He advocated for those in need and provided opportunities for many residents in the City of Hamilton. A selfless man who gave so much to the community.



RON FOXCROFT FAIR PLAY AWARD
2026 Recipient – Cynthia Meneses

Presented to an official who has demonstrated tremendous dedication to the principles of fair play and played a leadership role in the development of sport officials. Beginning as a basketball referee at McMaster University, Ron Foxcroft went on to an impressive career as the NCAA's only Canadian basketball referee and officiated international basketball games in more than 30 countries, including the gold medal basketball game in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. He was the only Canadian appointee to the National Association of Sports Officials board in the USA. Ron is known as much for his affection for sport and his entrepreneurial success as he is for his own athletic achievements and his desire to help youth.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD
2026 Recipient – Helen Downey

Presented to an individual who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment as an active volunteer in amateur sport over an extended period of time; may be a previous winner of a distinguished sport volunteer award.

DISTINGUISHED SPORT VOLUNTEER AWARDS

2026 Recipients listed below

Presented to individuals nominated for a minimum of a 10-year contribution to sport in the community; can only win once; nominees are screened for

Alex Depew
Golden Horseshoe
Cycling Hub

Amanda Levesque
Hamilton Basketball
Association

Ancaster Little League
Ancaster Little League

Angela Pejic
Hamilton Sparta

Benjamin Neiterman
Dundas Minor Hockey

Carolann Laurie
Flamborough Dundas
Soccer Club

Colin Johnston
Golden Horseshoe Cycling Hub

Debbie Croft
Beverly Minor Hockey

Heidi Davidson
Hamilton Olympic Club

Jim Galvin
Sport Hamilton

John Pettorossi
SaltFleet Stoney Creek

Ken Aird
Ancaster Little League

Lauren (Lolo) Oldfield
MQV and Steel City Inclusive

Lisa Rogers
CANUSA

Louise Palciauskas
CANUSA

Marcel Zinn
Hamilton Senior Pickleball

Marlie Feltz
Saltfleet Stoney Creek

Matt Ertl
Dundas Little League

Norman Haac
91st Highlanders

Novelette (Nove) Gordon
Stoney Creek Athletics

Patrick Brennan
CANUSA

Paula Bertollo
Hamilton Senior Pickleball

STAC Hamilton
STAC Hamilton

Tony De Luca
Mount Hamilton
Youth Soccer Club

City Enrichment Fund

The City of Hamilton invests in community organizations and professional artist projects through the City Enrichment Fund

The City Enrichment Fund has seven funding areas:



Agriculture



Arts



Communities,
Culture &
Heritage



Community
Services



Digital



Environment



Sport &
Active
Lifestyles

Learn more about the process and apply:

www.hamilton.ca/CityEnrichmentFund

905-546-2424 ext. 4524

**Applications
are open from
Oct 1 - Nov 15
each year**