



2007 Community Recognition Awards



Dan Marchuk

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Wainwright Cheetahs Self-Advocacy Group nominated Pastor Dan Marchuk for Citizen of the Year because he makes time in his busy schedule to entertain at social functions.

“Pastor Dan sings country and old-time rock and roll, so the individuals love to have him at their functions,” says a group representative.

“He has taken the time to get to know everyone individually and calls each person by name. The individuals are always excited to see him, as he interacts and includes everyone. He even makes a special effort to greet and visit with everyone when he sees him or her out and about in the community.”

The pastor also drives people to and from church if they need a lift.

Ron Crossley, Chair of the PDD Central Region Community Board, praised the pastor in his letter of congratulations for his “ongoing contribution in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities in the Wainwright area.”

Tonya de Ruiter

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Tonya is a volunteer friend to Russel, a man who lives at Michener Services. According to Carmen Kostiuik, Volunteer Services Coordinator at Michener, Tonya and Russel “hit it off right away” and instantly became great walking buddies.

Over the past two years, their relationship has grown stronger. “Tonya came to see him when he was really sick, made and adapted a cape for him so he would be more comfortable on their walks, came to meet his family when they were down to visit, brought her sister to meet Russel when she came over from Holland and thinks about him on all the special occasions. Tonya has definitely gone the extra step to build their friendship,” Carmen says.

Support worker Beverly Lassen says Tonya “brings sunshine” not only to Russel, but also to all his housemates when she enters his home.

“If more people were as kind and caring and involved as Tonya, the world would be a better place.”

Banner Pharmacaps (Canada) Ltd.

GROUP OF THE YEAR

Karen Armstrong from Padnoma Support Services nominated Banner Pharmacaps for employing a woman with developmental disabilities for the past 16 years.

“Their willingness to work with the agency and the individual to help her adapt to the variety of changes that have happened over the years and the requirements that are requested of each employee has been overwhelming,” Karen says.

Banner makes soft-gel liquid capsules for the pharmacy industry and has operated in Olds since 1981. It employs about 100 people and in most regards it treats Wendy as it treats the other 99. Until recently, it kept her on day shifts, but she protested the special treatment and asked to work the same rotation as her fellow employees. Kate Willoughby, human resources director at Banner, said Wendy was right to make the request.

“She’s more than able to work the night shifts and I would say she’s probably one of the most reliable individuals we have in terms of being ready to work,” Kate told *The Red Deer Advocate*.

Banner, which has employed other adults with developmental disabilities, was acknowledged for helping them become valued members of the community.