



CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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JUNE CALLWOOD VOLUNTEER AWARD APPLICATION – VICTOR HERRINGTON (SPARTA, ON)

My name is Dusty Underhill; I am the Conservation Areas Supervisor at the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA), located just outside of Aylmer, Ontario. I am writing in regards to our most outstanding volunteer Victor Herrington whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for the last ten years. Victor has been a long time dedicated member and resident of the village of Sparta in the municipality of Central Elgin. He has served as the CCCA's longest standing volunteer. He has put in three to five days a week of hard work and in kind labor for the last 21 years contributing to the success of the CCCA's many programs and services.

The outstanding work ethic of Victor Herrington is amplified through his many contributions to both us, the CCCA, his work at the St. Thomas Raceway Park and his neighbourly attitude within the Sparta and beyond communities. Victor's assistance at the CCCA is far more reaching than just my department; he has assisted in the Planning, Stewardship, Springwater Campground, Education, Special Events, and Water Management departments. There is no department here at the CCCA that has not had the pleasure of experiencing Victor's dedication to the CCCA, work ethic, and of course, his humour and jokes. No matter the job or task, Victor always brings a positive attitude and knows how to bring a smile to a visitor or employees face.

Every spring Victor is always eager to assist in our local tree planting initiatives with Peter Dragunas, the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority's Water Management Technician. Victor takes great pride in tree planting, not only does it help combat climate change and provide habitat for wildlife, it is a way to give back to his local community and the residents of the watershed. While assisting with tree planting, Victor also provides a wealth of knowledge when it comes to opening up the Springwater Campground. As Victor has been volunteering at the CCCA for over 20 years, he holds an extensive knowledge that even surpasses most employees of the workings of the campground. His expertise at campsite reclamation, general grounds keeping, and plumbing duties comes with great appreciation as, even if he is modestly unaware, keeps us running like a well-oiled machine. Furthermore, Victor has the gift (where many do not) of "witching water", where he uses brass wires to find water or conductive material underneath soil to ensure leaks are located and secured.

With his love for labor and social wellbeing, Victor helps maintain a level of professionalism in the Springwater Campground that always goes over and above what would be expected from a paid employee. Our patrons have always enjoyed Victor's presence within the campground as he always gives a caring and lending hand or ear to all of our campers. His attention to detail and years of experience also come with a lot of knowledge for event set-ups that occur annually within the Springwater Campground. Victor takes great pride in custodial work keeping our washrooms to a level of cleanliness that exceeds all expectations.

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In the fall, Victor assists in the winterization of all of our buildings within the Springwater Campground assuring it is done properly and promptly. Towards the latter fall months of November and into December, Victor has always associated himself and assisted with our co-operative education programs. These include co-operative education students from various local high schools and post-secondary schools and with the Environmental Leadership Program (ELP). The ELP class has 24 youth, from the local high school, East Elgin Secondary School, working in collaboration with the CCCA for approximately 4 weeks out of their school year. Victor helps educate and works with these students completing various tasks from woodlot management, stewardship projects, park maintenance, and festival set-ups. Victor finds great joy in assisting with trimming crop tree limbs by the acre and removing any firewood that may be cut during the chainsaw course, we teach the ELP class. Victor then spends the rest of his winter months processing the wood for the Springwater Campground and our annual Springwater Maple Syrup Festival.

Staff at the CCCA all know when Maple Syrup time is near as Victor always buys a nice new flashy safety jacket to help him shine in his role as professional Sugar Bush Greeter/ Parker in which he enjoys being around seven days a week for the entire month of March. He greets each and every individual like he has known them for his entire life with gratitude and integrity. The pride he takes in his work and his social mannerisms in the workplace are exceptional at the very least. Extra care and attention is paid to those with special needs or disabilities with Victor insisting on helping each and every visitor in any way he can. He is also a great help in our Maple finishing room, boiling and bottling all of our delicious liquid gold, as he once again, brings a wealth of knowledge built from 21 years of service and dedication to our Maple Syrup Program.

With Victor's knowledge base, his dedication to the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority, and appreciation for others and his natural surroundings, any of the CCCA employees would be happy to boast to the help he has provided over the years. He is not shy to handle tough situations, or take on challenging tasks. He treats his fellow colleagues like his brothers and sisters with warm regards during tough times and lots of laughter during the good times. Victor Herrington is a local celebrity within both the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority and the village of Sparta. He is an upstanding citizen within his community helping with whatever he can to whomever asks for help. I would highly suggest Victor Herrington for this award as I could not think of another soul more deserving.

My name is Emily Febrey; I am the Community Outreach Technician with the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA). I am continuing on the words of Dusty Underhill in regards to the outstanding volunteerism from Victor Herrington. I have had the pleasure of knowing and learning from Victor since I was 16 (almost ten years now). In no way is Victor your typical role model, which is what, makes him even more worthy of this award. Victor has spent his almost 70 years of life devoting it to the betterment of others, his community and his friends and family. Victor's family experienced financial difficulties, loss and sadness early on in his life, causing him to leave school and take care of his family. Ever since, Victor has spent his life doing exactly what a volunteer is defined as, willingness to undertake a service without a concern of being compensated. When someone mentions Victor, a few words always pop into my mind, without hesitation: dedication, care, and happiness.

Dedication and work ethic has been brought up several times, however, this is probably the first thing that would pop into anyone who knows Victor's mind's. I have seen him put more effort into his

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work as a volunteer, than individuals who are paid to do more work than he does. I have seen him put more effort into physically intensive work, than individuals a quarter of his age. I have seen him take on any task, no matter how daunting or sometimes dirty (we do have a campground after all), when other people turn away. Victor is one of the most hard-working individuals I know and he takes pride and care into every task he takes on. Of course, this dedication goes beyond the CCCA, as he also puts forth this effort to the St. Thomas Raceway Park and helping his landlady in anything she needs assistance with (of course he wouldn't say no to anyone who needed a helping hand). Dusty was not lying when he said Victor is a local celebrity, there are groups who attend the Raceway every year that can't wait to catch up or check in with Victor. Most of the residents of our watershed know Victor by name, not only because of his hard work but also because of his knowledge of the community and kind words.

Care comes to my mind for a couple different reasons for Victor. He puts so much care into Springwater Conservation Area, the workings of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority and his community that I am always truly inspired. The focus for Victor is not money, business or financial success; it is instead, our reputation as a community-based organization, providing an outstanding experience to every one of our visitors, and living every single day with happiness. Victor is a very caring individual and ensures that he checks in on everyone when he comes in to work, whether it is to ask about our weekend, tell us a joke, or offer each of us a Scots mint. The respect I have for Victor started when I was 16 and saw this old man working at the same pace I was. It has grown into an appreciation and friendship that I value every day at work. Victor Herrington, no matter the bad day he has had, will always offer a smile, tell you one of his classic jokes, or simply ensure he says goodbye. Victor has dedicated 21 years to the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority as a volunteer and I cannot think of more deserving individual of this award.