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Community Builder Award – Al Potvin

“I want to make this place better for generations to come.” This is the sentiment of a man who to know him, is to understand what genuine community building truly is; what tireless commitment to making that community a better and healthier place to live, work and raise a family looks like over a lifetime of giving. And this is simply Al’s unassuming way of life.

Al Potvin dedicated decades of his life nurturing and transforming his property on Carrs Street into a community space. Neighbours and friends were welcome to explore the walking trails, enjoy the stunning field of sunflowers, come together for solstice bonfires, and compost mountains of leaves.

The Potvin family further supported our community with employment opportunities at Hilan, a play structure company Al and his first wife Barb founded, as well as through countless fundraising and volunteering initiatives for local charities including the Almonte General Hospital Fairview Manor Foundation, the Almonte Potters Guild, the Almonte Civitan Club and Home Hospice North Lanark.

Now in his mid-80s, Al wanted his estate to continue to give back to the community. After carefully choosing a developer to carry on his vision of the Carrs property, Al has created an incredible legacy by donating \$1M to support youth in Mississippi Mills from the proceeds of the land sale. The Al Potvin Family Foundation will provide funds for the kids in our community to access tutoring, therapy and important life opportunities. It is his hope that the Al Potvin Family Foundation will help empower the children and youth of Mississippi Mills to reach their potential.

As a testament to the impact he has had on the community and its residents, Al received two separate nominations for the Community Builder award. I’d like to share some of the comments from the letters of support:

“Al has thought and planned and given generously and selflessly to leave a legacy of support to local youth. He embodies the spirit and wisdom of a true community builder.”

“Al has not only earned this nomination for the Community Builder Award but has the respect and gratitude of the many individuals and organizations he has served.”

“His many good works have arisen from his guiding motto so well articulated in a recent interview concerning his \$1 million fund for youth, *“I want to make this a better place for generations to come.”* In achieving this goal, he has definitely succeeded!”

“Al is a generous and selfless man, a true community builder, bringing people together.”

“I believe that a quiet, unassuming gentleman, who steps forward to generously provide a million dollars to area kids, to help them experience life and grow into contributing members of this community, would surely, to my mind, satisfy any criteria to be recognized as a community builder.”

“I am happy here now, I feel at home and welcomed and that, in no small part, is from Al and the way he models for everyone here what it means to be a community leader and steward of everything we all value in a small town.”

Al Potvin is an extraordinary, living legacy. I am grateful for his kindness, generosity and for being a role model we can all strive to learn from. On behalf of Mississippi Mills Council, it gives me great privilege to present the Community Builder Award to Al Potvin.

Sincerely,



Christa Lowry
Mayor of Mississippi Mills