

Access Orangeville's Annual Accessibility Champion Award

2024 Criteria

- These awards recognize individuals, local businesses, or a community group who have demonstrated a passion for making the community more accessible by continually going above and beyond to achieve this goal.
- “There are many champions in our community helping us remove barriers and provide accessible services, and these awards offer a chance for us to recognize the great work they are doing,” said Councillor Rick Stevens, Chair of the Access Orangeville Committee. “I encourage you to nominate someone in our community who creates an accessible Orangeville for all.”

Nominations must be submitted by no later than 12 p.m. on Friday, May 3 by email at accessibility@orangeville.ca.

The following information must be included in the nomination:

- The name of the individual, business, or community group nominated.
- The reason for the nomination, including what they have done to make our community more accessible for all.
- Include the name, address, and phone number of the nominee. Nominees must be a resident or business in Dufferin County.
- The name and contact information, including the phone number, of the person submitting the nomination.

The 2024 award recipients will be announced during Accessibility Week, observed from May 25 to June 1.

Nominations for the Accessibility Champion Awards are announced annually in the Spring, with the award presentations held during National Accessibility Week. Follow the Town on social media or online at orangeville.ca for next year's announcement.

2024 Accessibility Champion Award

- On May 29, Mayor Lisa Post and Councillor Rick Stevens hosted the 2024 Accessibility Champion Awards at Orangeville Town Hall, recognizing those who demonstrate a passion for making an accessible community.
- “Access Orangeville was thrilled to receive eight outstanding nominations for the Accessibility Champion Awards this year,” said Councillor Rick Stevens, committee Chair. “The organizations and individuals recognized go above and beyond to ensure our community is inclusive and accessible.”
- During the event, Mayor Post also proclaimed May 26 to June 1, 2024, as National Accessibility Week, promoting inclusion and accessibility in all communities and workplaces, celebrating the progress that has been made, and inspiring everyone to further break down accessibility barriers.

2024 Accessibility Champion Award Recipients

Access Orangeville's Annual Accessibility Champion Award

James Jackson

James Jackson has continued to take on bigger roles in helping make Orangeville more accessible over the past few years. As current co-chair of Access Orangeville and chair of the Community Improvement Committee, he is always ready to help others on the journey towards accessibility.

The Healing Moon

The Healing Moon continues to go above and beyond when it comes to providing a safe, inclusive shopping experience. They work with local support businesses to ensure customers with neurodiversity and disabilities can receive service in inclusive ways, as well as hosting community classes where all are welcome.

B Social – Community Living Dufferin (CLD)

B Social has been servicing Dufferin County at café locations and concession stands for the past five years. Launched in 2018, B Social is an initiative run by CLD in partnership with Family Transition Place and Dufferin Child and Family Services. The initiative was created to provide equal opportunities for members of the community with barriers to employment. It is a nonprofit entity under CLD providing paid employment and job training in various venues in Dufferin County to those looking to enter or re-enter the workforce in an environment suited to meet each person's individual needs. As of 2024, B Social employs over 30 people.

2023 Accessibility Champion Award Recipients

Branching Out Support Services

Branching Out Support Services builds an accessible community through programming and events, such as workshops and classes, dances, and art shows. The organization also provides education and consulting services to other businesses, organizations, and community groups about neurodiversity, equity, inclusion, and creating accessible and welcoming spaces.

The leadership team at Branching Out Support Services values and seeks opinions and experiences from those with lived experience to determine the direction of the organization and how they can build community together. Staff and participants also volunteer their time to opportunities and events that build accessible communities.

Active Lives Canada

This not-for-profit organization operates a day program with two campuses - one in Orangeville and one in Shelburne. Both campuses are fully accessible to individuals with any ability. The team at Active Lives Canada motivates, engages, and encourages all participants through their dedication to inclusion, kindness, fun, and accessibility.

Program activities include swimming, hiking, workouts, volunteering with other organizations, cooking, baking, shopping, coding, computer use, and more. All programs are adapted to each of the individual's abilities. Active Lives Canada opened a Respite house in Orangeville in April of this year, available to everyone in Dufferin and the surrounding area.

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James Jackson

James Jackson is a true Accessibility Champion and advocates daily to bring attention to accessibility matters in Orangeville. James is a current member of the Access Orangeville Committee and was a member of the Joint Accessibility Committee the past term of Council. James is a strong advocate for accessible parking in the downtown core and regularly attends Council meetings to bring attention to matters such as the Broadway Bricks project, making sure his voice is heard for everyone. James is also the Ambassador for the Caledon Dufferin Chapter for Multiple Sclerosis.

Michelle and Rick Arsenault, Bluebird Café & Grill

Michelle and Rick Arsenault are well known restaurateurs in Orangeville. Michelle and Rick recently provided accessibility training to their front-of-house staff (training was provided by another Accessibility Champion: Branching Out Support Services). Continuously seeking ways to improve the dining experience for all guests, Bluebird Café now provides double handled mugs and weighted utensils to assist those with hand tremors or involuntary muscle movements.

Advocacy Award: Participants at Branching Out Support Services (BOSS)

Participants at Branching Out Support Services (BOSS) will receive a special Advocacy Award for their work to bring attention to accessibility concerns related to local recreation and transit opportunities. The group was invited to meet with Mayor Lisa Post and Town staff and share their lived experiences; Town Recreation staff was able to add inclusive court time to program offerings and provided accessible access to drop-in gym space. This active group can also be seen out in the community volunteering, doing clean up, and delivering flyers for the Blues & Jazz Festival.