

The logo for PeerWorks is displayed on a dark blue background. The word "PeerWorks" is written in a white, serif font. To the right of the text, there are several thick, curved lines in a bright orange-red color, creating a stylized, abstract graphic element.

PeerWorks

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

THERESA CLAXTON-WALI COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

We are honoured to announce the establishment of the Theresa Claxton-Wali Community Impact Award, a tribute to the enduring legacy of our beloved colleague and friend. This award, created in collaboration with the Krasman Centre, aims to recognize those exceptional individuals who embody the extraordinary qualities that defined Theresa Claxton-Wali's impactful career and contributions.

Award Description:

The Theresa Claxton-Wali Community Impact Award acknowledges individuals who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advocating for the rights and voices of individuals with lived experience with mental health and substance use challenges. This recognition honours individuals who have made noteworthy impacts on the Peer Support Movement, Consumer Survivor Initiatives, and the overall mental health and addiction sector in Ontario.

Qualities:

1. **Advocate for Autonomy:** The nominee demonstrates a steadfast commitment to upholding the rights and amplifying the voices of individuals navigating mental health and addiction challenges.
2. **Innovative Peer Support:** The nominee spearheads creative approaches in the peer support space, fostering hope, facilitating recovery, and cultivating meaningful connections.
3. **Systemic Influence:** The nominee exhibits a track record of positively reshaping the mainstream mental health and addiction sector by advocating for the inclusion of peer support services.

Criteria for nomination:

- The nominee must agree to the nomination in writing and, if successful, is invited to accept the award at an in-person ceremony.
- Anyone may nominate except the nominee.
- The nominee must be a resident of Ontario.

PEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Our Peer of the Year Award goes to a peer worker who stands out for their dedication to improving mental health and addictions support in Ontario. Through their compassionate and lived experience-informed work, the Peer of the Year uplifts community members, improves service delivery and amplifies the consumer's voice. Their work may include creating/leading new peer support programs, advocating against mental health and addiction stigma and discrimination, or working to transform existing practices within an organization. The Peer of the Year is a leader in their community (geographical, organizational, identity-based, etc.) and an inspiration to other peers.

Criteria for Nomination:

- The nominee must agree to the nomination in writing and, if successful, is invited to accept the award at an in-person ceremony.
- Anyone may nominate except the nominee.
- The nominee must be a resident of Ontario.

UNSUNG HERO AWARD

Our Unsung Hero Award goes to an individual who, through their tireless commitment and work, has shown excellence in their service and support around mental health and addictions in Ontario. Often, these are members of organizations or communities who work hard to encourage and amplify other voices, shine a spotlight on the work of others and do behind-the-scenes work to keep peer support services running and peer support communities strong. While they may not be at the front and center of an organization, their work enormously impacts the community and people served. **This award is specifically intended for someone who not been recognized for their work in mental health and addictions.**

Criteria for Nomination:

- The nominee must agree to the nomination in writing and, if successful, is invited to accept the award at an in-person ceremony.
- Anyone may nominate except the nominee.
- The nominee has never won any mental health and addictions-related award at the provincial or national level.
- The nominee must be a resident of Ontario.

PAY IT FORWARD AWARD

The Pay It Forward Award celebrates allies who have faced significant life challenges and transformed their experiences into powerful advocacy for positive change in Ontario.

In the realm of mental health, "paying it forward" takes on diverse forms. Nominees for this award mobilize their personal experiences to advocate for systemic improvements and better conditions. Whether using their journey to champion improved conditions for individuals' experiencing mental health and addiction/substance use challenges or advocating for more

affordable housing and enhanced shelter conditions after overcoming homelessness, the nominees create a more compassionate and supportive environment for others. They demonstrate empathy towards their peers and inspire future generations to do the same, serving as beacons of hope for the future and enduring sources of inspiration.

Criteria for Nomination:

- Nominees must provide written consent for the nomination and, if successful, are invited to accept the award for an in-person ceremony.
- Nominations are open to anyone except the nominee, ensuring diverse voices and experiences are considered in recognizing allies who have made significant contributions to fostering positive change.
- The nominee must be a resident of Ontario.

ORGANIZATIONAL AWARDS

INNOVATORS AWARD

Even after over thirty years, we are consistently impressed by the originality and creativity in the Peer Support field. Our Innovators Award honours Ontario-based organizations with ingenuity and innovation in their peer-based work in the mental health and addictions sector.

This might include:

- innovating programs digitally (e.g., creating online meetings, discussion boards, Twitter threads, YouTube channels, and webinars);
- working to overcome digital barriers through revised service models or mental health initiatives (e.g., warm phone lines, care-package drop-offs, art initiatives, etc.);
- or building upon the learned experiences from serving communities during challenging times.

Criteria for Nomination:

- Single organizations and collaborations/partnerships between several organizations can be nominated for this award.
- The nominee must agree to the nomination in writing and, if successful, is invited to send a representative to accept the award at an in-person ceremony. The organization may send an acceptance letter or a recorded video message if a representative is unavailable.
- Individuals or organizations may nominate an organization in this category if they are not a staff or board member of the nominated organization.
- The organization must be based in Ontario.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS AWARDS

Our Community Builders Award recognizes allies who contribute significantly to fostering collaboration and embodying the values of peer support. This award goes to organizations, based in Ontario, instrumental in creating bridges and cultivating a sense of unity with a strong commitment to equity and social justice.

Community builders, in the context of this award, are allies who actively engage in collaborative efforts to amplify the voices of those who have been marginalized. They play a pivotal role in increasing the capacity for peer involvement in decision-making processes. The impactful work of community builders takes various forms:

- They may forge connections across different organizations, sectors, neighbourhoods, regions, or identity/issue/social groups.
- They may facilitate the development of relationships and networks, creating more inclusive and resilient communities.
- They may enhance services, broaden access to support and information, and contribute to improving community well-being.
- They may work to reduce stigma and discrimination through their initiatives and advocacy efforts.

Criteria for Nomination:

- Single organizations and collaborations/partnerships between several organizations are eligible for nomination in this award category.
- The nominee must agree to the nomination in writing and, if successful, is invited to send a representative to accept the award at an in-person ceremony. The organization may send an acceptance letter or a recorded video message if a representative is unavailable.
- The organization must be based in Ontario.
- **Nominations for this category are open to any individual or organization not affiliated with the staff or board of the nominated organization, ensuring a diverse and inclusive selection process.**