



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Here4Hope is Pleased to Announce The Centre Wellington Minor Lacrosse Association As The 2022 Recipient of the Neil Dunsmore Power of One Award

This Annual Award recognizes an individual or organization in Wellington County whose actions have made a significant contribution to promoting life and preventing suicide

Everyone has a role to play in preventing suicide and the goal of Here4Hope is to engage as many individuals and organizations as possible in this important work. We are pleased to announce **The Centre Wellington Minor Lacrosse Association as the 2022 Recipient of the Neil Dunsmore Power of One Award.**

The award is named for Neil Dunsmore. In the fall of 2020, Neil Dunsmore walked 500km from Elora to Ottawa. Neil's 'Steps to Stop the Silence' was a message to everyone that we must not stay silent about mental illness and suicide. Proceeds from the walk supported the Cody Sheppard Project. Neil demonstrated commitment, leadership, and compassion through his efforts for 'Steps to Stop the Silence'.

This year's recipient of the Neil Dunsmore Power of One award, **The Centre Wellington Minor Lacrosse Association** exhibits the same qualities that Neil exemplified as he inspired us with each step. While lacrosse is often known for its physical health benefits, in recent years the CWMLA has extended its program to bring focus to the mental well-being of their organizations participants as well.

The many lockdowns experienced during COVID proved to be a long and difficult time for everyone, CWMLA was no exception. The challenge of trying to return to regular season programming only to be at the mercy of provincial lockdowns was not easy to overcome. With a heightened concern for the youth in their program and for all those having difficulty themselves maneuvering through the pandemic, CWMLA not only stayed active with messaging across social media channels, but also the lacrosse association put together an online webinar called Strength In Our Community.

This webinar introduced topics which are often difficult to initiate in conversation, but of which are extremely necessary to shed light on the societal issues that surround them.

Myrna Hutchison was invited to share her personal story of Suicide Loss and the importance of discussing the topic of Mental Health within our circles. Myrna shared valuable tools and resources available within our community, actions that we can take to combat the stigma attached to Mental Illness and tips to support our resiliency as we continue to work our way through the pandemic.

Damon Edwards, a seasoned lacrosse player well known and often cheered for when playing in the National Lacrosse League, shared his experience as a bi-racial professional athlete. Damon's focus was on the topics of diversity, inclusion, and racial injustices, all of

which require a deeper level of understanding to be able to influence much needed change today.

The key messages of the webinars were that a community can weather a storm much better when they are united.

“The Centre Wellington Minor Lacrosse Association is a tremendous example of an organization taking a whole community approach to preventing suicide and fostering hope and resilience, especially during the past two years when our resiliency has been tested,” says Cecilia Marie Roberts, Manager of Suicide Prevention Initiatives.

It is evident that CWMLA’s holistic approach to support, from both a physical and emotional perspective, flows from the executive committee down through the coaching staff to all the players within the organization. Congratulations CWMLA for being a part of the change that we need to see in this world!

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ABOUT Here4Hope

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