

## **2019 Award of Merit Recipient - Denis Laurin**

Our next Award of Merit recipient is Denis Laurin. Denis grew up in Lafontaine, married and moved to Midland where he resides with his family. Denis' family roots are in farming; however, after working in various roles, as well as serving as a volunteer firefighter, Denis finally realized his dream of becoming a full-time firefighter where he serves for the City of Barrie.

Denis' desire to serve the community extends beyond his career as a Fire Fighter. Denis has a big heart and champions causes that help the less fortunate or those in crisis situations. In the past he has dedicated his time to helping others by facilitating a food program, a gardening program and a teach cooking program, all of which he established and offered for free.

In 2010 Denis took on the role of a Street Outreach Worker with the Town of Midland and the County of Simcoe as part of the Street Outreach Program. The program's focus was on the homeless, those suffering from addictions, prostitution, and trafficking. Since its inception, the program has evolved to one around homelessness and is now organized through the Salvation Army. Denis takes his part time position at the Salvation Army, far beyond his 26 hours per week to make himself available to those in need 24/7. He is 'the go to guy' for any matter that affects the homeless and disadvantaged.

Since 2010 and despite the commitments of full-time work, Denis has continued to volunteer a significant amount of his time as a Street Outreach Worker and Program Coordinator with the Salvation Army. He is a prominent figure throughout the Town for those in need. Denis walks the communities in Midland and Penetanguishene where he finds people hard sleeping, camping or couch surfing and helps bring them into The Guesthouse Shelter system or links them to the County's hotel voucher system as well as a network of social services.

Denis goes beyond the call of duty by building relationships. He follows people serving time for minor offences at the Central North Correction Centre and assists them in obtaining the services they need to get them back on their feet.

Denis continues to be involved in the community availing his time to make Midland and the surrounding community a better place for all residents. He is a true champion and inspiration.

It is a distinct privilege to present to Mr. Denis Laurin, on behalf of Council and all citizens, the Award of Merit in honour of his considerable services to all in our community.