

**For release on Earth Day, April 22, 2017**

## **Hamilton Environmentalists of the Year Award Winners Announced**

Hamilton's Environmentalists of the Year Awards Committee is pleased to announce this year's Environmentalists of the Year award recipients. Established in 1979, these awards recognize the dedicated efforts of citizens, businesses and organizations to improve the environment in our community in 2016. Three categories of awards will be presented at a community dinner during Environment Week in June:

- 1) The **Dr. Victor Cecilioni Award for the Environmentalist of the Year** recognizes long-term efforts that create a significant impact in the community and there are two recipients:
  - **Jen Baker** has spent the last 20 years as a community volunteer, and has also worked as the Land Trust Manager with the Hamilton Naturalists' Club. She has worked tirelessly on many successful environmental stewardship projects that involve acquisition of lands for protection (most recently adding to the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System), habitat restoration, environmental education and community engagement.
  - **Graham and Emma Cubitt**, long-time local food activists and engaged citizens who led the creation of the of the Hill Street Community Garden, and were the key driving force behind the development of the Mustard Seed, Hamilton's only community-owned grocery store.
- 2) A **Lifetime Achievement Award** will be awarded to environmental educator and climate change activist, **Grant Linney** who has volunteered in many capacities, including as a leader with Hamilton Blue Dot, a presenter with Al Gore's Climate Reality Project, and a project leader with the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario.
- 3) Three **Awards of Merit** recognize a variety of environmental action activities of citizens and groups from across the community. This year's recipients are:
  - The **Stewards of Cootes Watershed**, whose public engagement efforts in support of the Cootes Paradise watershed over the last four years have resulted in approximately 150 community volunteer events that have recovered 235,000 pounds of waste from local waterways, and identified several pollution sources.
  - **Russell Ohrt**, a leader in urban farming and community gardening initiatives that increase the availability of local food, and helps residents to shrink their "food footprint". Currently Russ runs Backyard Harvest, turning unused yards in the lower city, into sustainable biodynamic vegetable gardens.
  - Educator **Kathy Zadvorny** has worked to engage Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board students and teachers with the environment over the last decade. She has shared her passion for the environment as an EcoSchools rep and mentor, an Eco Team facilitator, and through volunteer work with the Friends of the Eramosa Karst.

The Awards will be presented at the 38th Annual Environmentalists of the Year Awards Dinner on **Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**, at the **Michelangelo Banquet Centre** at 1555 Upper Ottawa Street in Hamilton. Doors will open for refreshments at 5:30 PM, and dinner will be served at 7 PM.

Anyone interested in celebrating Environment Week and the environment in Hamilton is invited: tickets are \$35 (tax included) and must be purchased in advance by June 2. Tables for eight or ten can be reserved. Tickets are available at Royal Botanical Gardens' Shop (open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily) or in the city centre of the city at Environment Hamilton, 22 Wilson Street #8, (905) 549-0900, or by emailing [contactus@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org). Tables may be reserved through [cebrown466@gmail.com](mailto:cebrown466@gmail.com).

### **Who sponsors the EOY Awards?**

The Environmentalists of the Year Awards and Dinner have been held each year for 38 years. An independent committee of community members judges the nominations. The Awards program is co-sponsored by the Conserver Society of Hamilton and District, the United Nations Association in Canada-Hamilton Branch, the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, Environment Hamilton, Royal Botanical Gardens, Friends of Red Hill Valley, and the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club with support from the Hamilton Conservation Authority and the Bay Area Restoration Council. For additional information on the Awards Dinner, please call (905) 547-5116, visit our website at [eoyawards.com](http://eoyawards.com), or look for us on Facebook.