



2024 Employee Excellence Awards

Office of the Manager, Communications and Organizational Development

Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2025

RE: Recipients of the 2024 Employee Excellence Awards

Winners

Teamwork Award: Tanya Fick

Tanya Fick works in the Human Resources Department as a Specialist, Ability and Wellness, and manages disability claims for Essex-Windsor EMS. She was lauded for being a “friendly face, smile and support to team members in the face of at times uncertainty and crisis.” She was praised for finding “workable solutions that are advantageous to everyone” and for working “tirelessly” to ensure team members transition back to work safely and with purpose.

Innovation Award: Adam Jamieson

Adam Jamieson is a Mechanic with the Infrastructure and Planning Services Department. He was hailed for being the “ultimate problem solver” who remains calm and collected under pressure to find solutions that work. He was able to utilize available parts and equipment and complete a job when multiple pieces of equipment broke down, enhancing operations and saving the County thousands of dollars.

Service Excellence Award: Nicholas Kramer

Nicholas Kramer is a Labourer, Materials Recovery Facility, with the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority. He was praised as a “dedicated and outstanding employee who consistently delivers exceptional customer service” with a “positive attitude, professionalism, and willingness to go above and beyond.” Since starting with EWSWA as a student, Nicholas has been coming to work every day with a smile and always asks if there is anything else he can do before heading home for the day.

Empowerment Award: Janey Murphy

Janey Murphy is a Procurement Officer in the Finance Department. She was praised for her “hard work, creativity and dedication” that empowers and inspires everyone with whom she collaborates, and for maintaining an open-door policy that “creates a welcoming and supportive environment, where team members feel safe to ask questions and seek guidance.” Her ability to strengthen relations, build trust and inspire confidence were highlighted as were her exceptional communication skills and her commitment to continuous improvement.

Honourable Mentions

Teamwork Award Honourable Mentions:

Kandice Gagnier

Kandice Gagnier is a Visitor Schedule Coordinator at Sun Parlor Home. She was heralded for exemplifying “a true sense of collaboration and team spirit” and for her always helpful nature. She was praised for her “infectious positive attitude” and for celebrating her colleagues and showing support to all departments.

Don Theriault

Don Theriault is a Paramedic with Essex-Windsor EMS. He was lauded for his “unwavering dedication to teamwork and the wellbeing of others” and for being a “pillar of support and a leader” who provides encouragement and support “without judgment or hesitation.” He was additionally praised for his strength and kindness and for being a trusted role model for his colleagues.

Marcia Mallia

Marcia Mallia is an Accounting Clerk with the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority. She was praised for her “exceptional teamwork and collaboration” and for “always helping others and stepping in when needed.” She was lauded for her “commitment to clear communication, problem-solving, and supporting colleagues,” helping them to accomplish their goals.

Donna Spickett

Donna Spickett is a Resource Assistant for the Essex County Library. She was honoured for her “sound judgment, organizational knowledge and collaborative approach to leadership.” She was also praised for her positive attitude and work ethic that inspires those around her to work as a team.

Kris Kretschmann

Kris Kretschmann is an Inspector Lead Hand with the Infrastructure and Planning Services Department. He was credited for his ability to “gather all parties and keep the train on the tracks.” He was lauded for his effective communication skills and his ability to keep “everyone involved and unified in the objective of the project.” He was heralded as a “strong force” for positivity in his department and for being a “tremendous team player for the County.”

Innovation Award Honourable Mentions:

Ellen van Wageningen

Ellen van Wageningen is the Communications Coordinator for the County of Essex. Ellen advanced a key pillar of the County’s Strategic Plan by imagining a new way to leverage an existing tool to roll out a Truth and Reconciliation education program to all employees. She researched, wrote and published weekly posts about Canada’s residential school system and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that are still available for on-demand reading.

Brigitte McDonald

Brigitte McDonald is a Personal Support Worker at Sun Parlor Home. She “truly exemplified the spirit of collaboration by taking the initiative to create personalized shirts for her fellow team members during the holiday season.” She went “above and beyond” by offering to personalize each shirt, “ensuring that everyone felt included and genuinely valued.” Her “thoughtful gesture not only strengthened the bonds within the team but also uplifted the spirits of the residents, creating a joyful environment that they could share during the holiday celebrations.”

Meikel Gobet

Meikel Gobet is a Paramedic with Essex-Windsor EMS. With his “forward-thinking approach and commitment to operational efficiency,” Meikel proposed a strategic relocation of the Mass Casualty Incident kit within ambulances, which improved kit access and also enhanced Paramedic workflow, reducing unnecessary delays in critical incidents. He was praised for his “simple yet impactful solution to improve readiness, efficiency and patient care.”

Tom Paquette

Tom Paquette is a Labourer at the Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority’s Regional Landfill. He has taken on the challenge of setting up, operating and maintaining the first leachate treatment plant in Ontario using Reverse Osmosis. He was praised for his “proactive mindset and strong problem-solving skills” and for being a “leader amongst his peers in his passion to implement and operate sustainable technology for one of the County’s most valuable assets.”

Bailey Talpas

Bailey Talpas is a Resource Assistant with the Essex County Library. She was credited for being “instrumental” in the successful launch of the library’s new video game collection. “Her early adoption of video games for programming, along with her consistent and outstanding help with the selection of video games has been important for the success” of an initiative that has received an “overwhelmingly positive response from the public.”

Service Excellence Award Honourable Mentions:

Sean Connell

Sean Connell is a Network Analyst with the IT Department. Sean was lauded for his positive and friendly attitude and his exceptional problem-solving skills. He was praised for his ability to step up in any situation, supporting employees facing confounding technical issues and supporting the County in achieving its strategic goals.

Vincenza Chambers

Vincenza Chambers is the Housekeeping Chargehand at Sun Parlor Home. She was lauded for her exceptional leadership skills, her proactive thinking and her positive and pleasant demeanor. She is always willing to listen and is fair and consistent in her approach to everyone and every issue. She was called "a pleasure to work with and a definite asset to the Home."

Danna Mallat

Danna Mallat is an Administrative Assistant with Essex Windsor-EMS. She was praised for her "unwavering commitment to excellence" and for a "responsiveness, accuracy and ability to anticipate needs" that enables her to manage administrative tasks with "precision, efficiency and a proactive approach." She was lauded for solving challenges before they arise and for fostering "a workplace culture of teamwork and respect."

Laura Borland

Laura Borland is a Resource Assistant with the Essex County Library. She was "celebrated for her ability to create a welcoming environment, deliver exceptional customer service and outstanding programming." Patrons drive from other Towns to visit the children's section she maintains in her home branch and Laura's "passion and commitment to the community is second to none."

Jenelle Barrette

Jenelle Barrette is an Administrative Assistant in the Infrastructure and Planning Services Department. She was lauded for "always going above and beyond to assist" her colleagues and for her consistently positive and professional attitude. She is known for her "uncanny ability to make each individual feel as though they are her only focus, even though she is providing other managers and staff members with the same level of effort."

Empowerment Award Honourable Mentions:

Diane Gleason

Diane Gleason is an Administrative Assistant who is known for being “the heart of Sun Parlor Home,” and for being a “friendly face” and a “constant source of support” to colleagues during her 28 years of exemplary service at Sun Parlor Home. She was praised for always “going above and beyond” to support the team and for ensuring team members feel heard and valued. She is well known to staff and residents for “her kindness, willingness to help, and the unwavering support she provides.”

Mechelle Murphy

Mechelle Murphy is a District Chief with Essex-Windsor EMS. She was lauded for always showing “up to work with a positive attitude” and for always being ready to tackle complex issues by working through them with her colleagues. She was credited with engaging in difficult conversations to “foster the team’s growth both professionally and personally” and for the countless hours she has volunteered to support the Peer Support Team and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, including initiating the raising of the Pride flag and the introduction of Pride epaulettes for staff.

Mike Nicolai

Mike Nicolai is an Inspector at the Regional Landfill with the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority. He has a “huge impact on the team” with his “positive attitude and genuine kindness” and his ability to always find the bright side of any situation. Co-workers feel good when they are around Mike, who “leads by example, always motivating others to do the same as a leader amongst his peers in his passion for providing great service and a positive attitude towards customers and other staff.”

Elaine Buschman

Elaine Buschman is a Resource Assistant with the Essex County Library. She was lauded for the “consistent goodwill and encouragement” she shows to members of her team. She was praised for “creating an environment where other staff are able to thrive” and for her “drive to achieve success in programming, circulation, and traffic.”

Don Kraynack

Don Kraynack is a Supervisor in the Roads Maintenance Division of the Infrastructure and Planning Services Department. He was credited with inspiring and lifting up his team “by example, by listening and by fostering a positive attitude both within himself and for his team.” He was praised for being a “calming force” when stressful situations arise and for mentoring and empowering younger colleagues by sharing the knowledge and experience gained during more than 30 years with the County. Don was heralded as a “tremendous resource” with an incredibly versatile skillset.