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News Release

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LSTAR and REALTOR® Mary Johnson win provincial Spirit Award

London, March 11, 2015

At the Ontario Real Estate Association's 2015 Leadership Conference in Toronto, Londoners took home not one, but two Ontario REALTORS Care Foundation Spirit Awards – one for an Association and one for an individual – in this case, London REALTOR® Mary Johnson.

"The Spirit Award recognizes Associations and individuals whose actions and activities promote the Foundation and advance its mission," explains LSTAR President Carl Vandergoot. The Foundation's mission is to help OREA's Member Boards raise money for shelter-related causes throughout the province. In 2014 alone it provided over \$900,000 in grants to over 165 shelter based organizations in communities in Ontario, including, in the case of the London Census Metropolitan Area, a \$50,000 donation over two years (2013-2014) to St. Joseph's Hospice and, in 2015, \$25,000 towards the construction of a new Women's shelter in St. Thomas.

In bestowing the award on LSTAR, the Association's ongoing promotion of and participation in the Foundation's Every REALTOR® Challenge campaign, wherein participating Boards donate \$1.00 per Member per Month, was cited, as was its contribution of staff time, most notably that of its Executive Vice President Betty Doré, who not only sat on its Board of Governors/Directors for many years and then as Chair and then President, leading the team through significant structural change in the Foundation and its governance.

Also cited was LSTAR's use of the Foundation's Express Grants program in 2014-2015, which resulted \$62,984 worth of grants to local shelter-related charities, including Youth Opportunities Unlimited, the London Registry, Mission Services, Hockey Helps the Homeless London, and Merrymount.

"Since 1992, LSTAR has focused its community service on shelter-related charities and advocated on behalf of affordable housing and homelessness at the local, provincial and national levels," says Vandergoot. "It's very gratifying to have that recognized by our peers."

Mary Johnson's Spirit Award recognized the charitable work she is doing through Kindness Above Everything (KAE), a Foundation she created "to improve the lives of local impoverished

families through financial support.” KAE connects with local agencies to find the hidden needs of families in the community, provide financial relief for children, adolescents and seniors living in poverty and open up doors of opportunity for children and adolescents through mentorship and leadership programs. KAE’s beneficiaries include women and family shelters, mental health programs, after school programs, kids camps and meals for seniors.

“Mary has, for many years, been quietly helping people in need, always operating under the radar and not bringing any attention to herself,” says Vandergoot. “ KAE allows her to do the same thing, but on a greater scale and with more impact. In our opinion, Mary is the very embodiment of the spirit that the Spirit Award was created to recognize.”

The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) exists to provide our REALTOR® Members with the support and tools they need to succeed in their profession and adheres to a Quality of Life philosophy, supporting growth that fosters economic vitality, provides housing opportunities, respects the environment and builds good communities and safe neighbourhoods and is a proud participant in the REALTORS Care Foundation’s Every REALTOR™ Campaign.