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Editor:

Marisa King (editor@featherstonphoenix.co.nz)

Environment:

Emily Greenberg (emilygberg@gmail.com)

Sports:

Ritchie Wards (ritchie.wards@gmail.com)

Advertising sales:

Nicky Wright (nickyw@hotmail.co.nz, 027 499 0081)

Layout and design:

Kristi Chalmers (advertise@featherstonphoenix.co.nz)

Printing: Printcraft

Distribution:

Chris Konig, Alistair Reid, Raewyn Russo, Gordon Wyeth

Contributors:

Jo Baldwin, Tessa Bunny, Romain Busby, Rachel Clarke, David Coates, Mary Gow, Nigel Graverson, Emily Greenberg, Murray Higginson, Anna Jong, Marina Lira, Warren Maxwell, Maureen Mortenson, Astrid Nielsch, Jen Olson, Julia Nerys Parry, Ronnie Priest, Sara Renall, Joanne Ridley-McBeth, Annelise Schroeder, Sylvia Smith, Guy Walker, Sandra Walters, Nicky Wright, Faith Wrigley

Community Awards for Jo and Maria

Sylvia Smith and Marisa King

Two Featherston women featured in the line-up of recipients at South Wairarapa Rotary's Pride of Workmanship and Community Awards held last month.

The awards returned after a two-year hiatus caused by COVID-19, with former Governor-General Dame Patsy Reddy giving out eight awards at a ceremonial dinner held at the South Wairarapa Working Men's Club.

Featherston Community Centre (FCC) Manager Joanna Baldwin was nominated for a Community Award by FCC Charitable Trust Board Chairman, Paul Mason, as "an exemplar for community service through vocation".

"Jo has endeared herself to Centre users and the community at large," read her citation.

"During the COVID-19 restrictions, she managed our own and other local facilities to provide Community Centre users and groups with a seamless experience and a degree of confidence in the midst of some very uncertain times.

"Jo has great plans for the future, including expanding our facilities and providing new activities, courses and support formats."

Nominated by Featherston resident Gwen Zittersteijn for a Community Award, Maria Berry has been a volunteer for Wairarapa Victim Support for over six years, three of which she has spent as a Homicide Support Worker. She also travelled to Christchurch to support the many victims of the mosque terrorist attack.

"Maria shows a huge commitment to victims in our community," said her citation.

"She is very well-respected by Police and other Victim Support workers in the Wairarapa. Maria supports victims at the most vulnerable and traumatic times of their lives. She is empathetic, kind and respectful to all."

It was very gratifying to be able to hold the awards this year and reward members of our community who have excelled in either their work or their volunteering and community spirit. As a community we are fortunate to have among us people who put others before themselves and invest enormous personal effort into their work and volunteering activities. The recipients are often modest and it is a privilege to be able to acknowledge and recognise their efforts through these awards.

Dame Patsy said that one of the privileges of being Governor-General was the opportunity to recognise people who do outstanding work in the community. Volunteers are not looking for recognition but rather follow the principles of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality and respect).

Each recipient was presented with an engraved shield and small gift.

Other award winners were:

Pride of Workmanship

Stephen Fennell, Operations Manager at Fresh Choice Greytown
Conor Kershaw, P & K General Store, Martinborough
Robert Sankey, Pete's Joinery & Building Limited

Community Awards

Bruce Cole & Shane Atkinson (joint nomination)
May Croft & Peter Croft (joint nomination)
Vivienne O'Reilly



Maria Berry with former Governor-General Dame Patsy Reddy.



Award recipient Joanna Baldwin with her husband, Shane.