

Town of Shelburne Accessibility Advisory Committee

Nominations are now being accepted for the Accessibility Award Program

Did you know that Ontario has new accessibility legislation (The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act - AODA) that is designed to make Ontario a barrier-free province by 2025? We want to help Shelburne's businesses and not-for-profits get ready to meet the terms of the new law, and reap all the benefits that come with making businesses accessible to all.

To help encourage awareness of the new law and encourage businesses to get ready, we are announcing two new civic awards:

“The Melissa Kelly Excellence in Access Award”

The award is named in honour of Melissa Kelly, a child from Shelburne who passed away at age 14. Melissa had a disability, but never saw it as a barrier to living a positive and joyful life. She dreamed of a barrier-free future for everyone.

One Melissa Kelly Excellence in Access Award will be presented annually to a Shelburne business or not-for-profit organization that shows exceptional commitment to making their business or organization accessible to people with disabilities. Some examples of award-worthy achievements could include initiatives such as offering outstanding customer service, installing permanent or portable ramps to permit people with mobility issues to access a building, designing signage that is accessible to people with vision loss or learning disabilities, redesigning a layout to eliminate trip hazards from store aisles or landscaping, or improving a website's design or content to make information more accessible to people with a variety of disabilities. These are only a few examples of ways that access could be creatively improved for people with different kinds of disabilities, whether physical, sensory, or intellectual in nature. The Melissa Kelly Award is designed to recognize accessibility achievements by any organization regardless of budget or size. The award is to encourage excellence for individual projects that need not require significant expense, but rather a willing attitude. The emphasis is on creativity and demonstrated commitment to making a practical step towards improving access, usually within the scope of a single small, short-term project.

“The Town of Shelburne Exceptional Achievement in Access Award”

This award is not awarded on a regular basis, but only when an exceptional commitment to accessibility is demonstrated. Only one will be given out in any given year, at the same time that the Melissa Kelly Award is presented. Examples of projects that would be considered for this award could be the comprehensive re-design and construction of a more accessible building, venue, or accessible website, the creation and implementation of a comprehensive accessibility plan (i.e. policies, procedures, training initiatives, capital improvements, communication systems) to improve access across an organization's activities. The Exceptional Achievement Award is for large projects that are more comprehensive in scale.

Prizes:

Recipients of the Melissa Kelly Excellence in Access Award will receive:

- a plaque or trophy with their name and project engraved on it, plus
- a letter of congratulations from the Town of Shelburne.
- a postcard to place in their window.

Recipients of the Exceptional Achievement in Access Award will receive:

- a plaque or trophy with their name and project engraved on it, plus
- a letter of congratulations from the Town of Shelburne.

The Exceptional Achievement in Access Award will not be awarded every year, but only when an exceptional project merits it. A maximum of one will be awarded in any given year.

Winners of either award will keep their plaque or trophy for permanent display on their premises.

How Nominations Will Be Accepted:

Projects may be nominated for either award by

- a third party, or
- be self-nominated

Nominations may be forwarded to the Town of Shelburne's Accessibility Advisory Committee at any time throughout the calendar year.

Nominations should include:

- a clear description of the problem the project was designed to address
- steps taken and resources used to solve the problem, and
- any results or feedback obtained from the project.

Supporting documentation (i.e. photographs, plans, website information, public feedback, etc.) that enable the judging committee to understand the project is welcome. The judging committee will also, whenever appropriate, visit a business or organization to review the project under consideration for an award.

Town of Shelburne Accessibility Advisory Committee

Debbie Harrison – Chair, Diane Gallinger – Vice Chair, Councillor Walter Benotto & Amanda Rodgers