

Essential to the community

John and June Van Bastelaar are dedicated volunteers in Saugeen Shores



June and John Van Bastelaar have been active in the Saugeen Shores community for decades.

June and John Van Bastelaar are busy volunteers within the Saugeen Shores community.

June, a former educator, and John, a retired Bruce Power employee and municipal politician, have quietly played an essential role in several community events and organizations, offering their time and talents to make Saugeen Shores a better place.

Together, they are active with the Rotarians and have been influential in the annual Rotary Huron Shore Run in support of Saugeen Memorial Hospital – a year-round project.

Nearly 800 people participated in the run on June 1, 2019, which also raised money for the Rotary Clubs of Southampton and Port Elgin and the Saugeen Track and Field Club.

The event has grown significantly over the last decade – only about 125 runners participated 10 years ago – and last year the event raised more than \$55,000.

June and John have also hosted international and local guests, including secondary school students, deliver for Meals on Wheels, and volunteer at the Salvation Army food bank.

At Port Elgin United Church, June

has served as council chair, Sunday School superintendent, chair of Christian education, and currently is chair of the stewardship committee, said Rev. Bonnie Holliday, who nominated the Van Bastelaars as this issue’s Game Changers.

“June is a member of the choir and has a lovely alto voice,” Bonnie said. “She is also director of the popular ecumenical Vacation Bible School, registering 100 children each August.”

John is a former mayor of Port Elgin and also served as deputy mayor of the amalgamated Town of Saugeen Shores. He was also a councillor for five years with the Town of Port Elgin.

He serves on a provincial board and has frequent trips to Toronto for meetings. He is also very active with fellow retirees from Bruce Power, where he worked as a maintenance specialist, a human resources officer, training supervisor, safety training technician and chemical technician over his 30-year career.

“Those are just a few of their activities,” Bonnie added. “They are busy with family too, including time spent with grandchildren in Guelph, Kitchener and Saugeen Shores; yet they always seem to have time to step up when a need arises.”

Kara Van Myall, the Van Bastelaars daughter, said her parents’ dedication to community has filtered to both their kids and grandchildren.

“They love their Saugeen Shores community and have

“They are busy with family too... yet they always seem to have time to step up when a need arises.”

- Rev. Bonnie Holliday

always played an active role in seeing it prosper,” Kara said. “Participating in our community, giving back and a sense of public good were values that were instilled from an early age. There is always time to help the community. Whether it was my father’s role in politics, my mother’s role in education or their joint efforts in health care, community development or groups like Rotary – big or small, they always step up to the plate to help out.”

Along with John and June, you can often see their kids and grandkids volunteering their time as well, Kara added.

“Bruce County is the place we call home and it’s the place where my parents dedicate their energy so everyone can call it home.” ■

Do you know someone in Grey/Bruce who is a Game Changer? Email amy@greybruceboomers.com and tell us more!

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