



---

# NEWS RELEASE

---

## Three Abbotsford Residents to Receive Order of Abbotsford

**Abbotsford, June 13, 2016** – Abbotsford City Council is proud to announce that Joanne Field, Graham Taylor and Wendy Neufeld are this year’s recipients of the Order of Abbotsford.

“Each of these individuals have dedicated countless hours of time and energy to making Abbotsford a complete community, and a better place for future generations,” said Braun. “We are sincerely grateful to each of this year’s recipients and their families for their years of dedication and volunteerism in our community.”

2016 Order of Abbotsford recipients:

- **Joanne Field** - In recognition of her passionately advocating for the youth of Abbotsford.
- **Graham Taylor** - In recognition of his extensive service and dedication to the community.
- **Wendy Neufeld** - In recognition of profound contributions to the community.

The Order of Abbotsford award ceremony will be held on July 1, at the Canada Day ceremonies at Abbotsford Exhibition Park. As a part of the Order of Abbotsford recognition, one or more recipients will be presented with The Citizen of the Year award which honours individual contributions of a citizen who has served with the greatest distinction and excelled in fields of endeavor benefiting the residents of the City of Abbotsford.

All 3 recipients will have their names recorded in the Order of Abbotsford Merit Book, which is maintained by the Office of the Mayor.

Nomination forms for the 2017 Order of Abbotsford awards are available on the City’s website at [www.abbotsford.ca/order](http://www.abbotsford.ca/order).

**BACKGROUNDER attached.**

-30-

**For more information contact:**

Tracy Boudreau  
Communications and Marketing  
E: [tboudreau@abbotsford.ca](mailto:tboudreau@abbotsford.ca)  
Tel: 604-851-4167



---

# Backgrounder

---

## Biographies 2016 Order of Abbotsford Recipients

**Graham Taylor, 2016 Order of Abbotsford** - *In recognition of his extensive service and dedication to the community, Graham is being honored with the Order of Abbotsford.*

Graham and his wife Melanie have raised their family in Abbotsford. Although Graham was an employee of the City of Abbotsford for thirty eight years, he was so much more – a citizen extraordinaire, having volunteered countless hours to various organizations and causes throughout the community. Noted as being a gentle and honest man, Graham has always been willing to give a helping hand where needed, often going the extra mile.

During the 1990s and 2000s, Graham was involved with the many multi-sport Games hosted in Abbotsford. Often with a focus on the transportation of athletes, Graham was always committed, always possessing a “can-do” attitude, and quick to respond when called up by Games Directors to solve problems or issues that arose before or during the Games.

Graham was also a long time driving force for the Canada Day parade, working together with his many helpers to ensure the parade was a success. His ability to manage eighty floats, without incident, has been admired by all who have watched him work. Even though his volunteerism for Canada Day has been well-defined, he has contributed so much more to tasks both big and small.

Graham has been involved with countless community organizations, including President of the Abbotsford Kiwanis Club, fifteen years with Operation Red Nose, and has provided “constant support and resourcefulness” to the 861 Silverfox Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron Abbotsford, and Abbotsford Air Force Association. He has been supportive of the various memorial events held at Thunderbird Square, including Remembrance Day, the Vimy Memorial, and the Battle of Britain. Graham often oversees the tasks of setting up ceremony sites, ensuring the delivery of equipment and making sure the clean-up is complete, all the while watching behind the scenes to make sure that the little extras are taken care of. The human touches he provides, such as a quick helping hand to escort a senior to a chair, are just part of what Graham is all about.

Although Graham is retired from his work at the City of Abbotsford, he will never retire from being involved and concerned about the citizens of Abbotsford and the many activities that make Abbotsford such a great place to live, work and play. We would all do well to emulate his approach to his community, family, friends and colleagues.

**Wendy Neufeld, 2016 Order of Abbotsford** - *In recognition of her leadership and contributions to the community, Wendy is being honored with the Order of Abbotsford.*

Following graduation from W.J. Mouat Secondary School, Wendy Neufeld began her successful career in the insurance industry and has now become one of only a handful of female Farm Insurance specialists.

Apart from her successful career, Wendy has demonstrated outstanding community leadership in many venues. In 2001, she joined the Rotary Club of Abbotsford-Sumas, of which she continues to be an active member. Over the years she has served in a variety of leadership roles with the Rotary Club, including Secretary, Treasurer, President, and Assistant District Governor for District 5050. She has played a key role in creating a partnership between the City of Abbotsford and the Rotary Club of Abbotsford-Sumas, which has resulted in the construction of 16 Rotary playgrounds in City Parks, as well as the establishment of Little Free Libraries being added into four City Parks. By distributing over 35,000 free children's books, The Little Free Libraries have had a significant impact of improving literacy within our community.

In 2013, Wendy joined the board of directors of the Abbotsford Community Foundation as Chair. During her tenure as Board Chair, Wendy implemented a succession plan for the executive, helped recruit new board members, introduced a board orientation program and steered its progress in building a successful student awards program and an impactful community grants program, improved the ACF's profile in the community, and raised funds for its operations and community endowment fund. Her success was recognized last November when ACF received the Business Excellence Award for Non-Profit Organization of the Year from the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce. Further to this, in 2015, under Wendy's leadership, Abbotsford Community Foundation provided over \$600,000 for student awards to graduating high school students in Abbotsford and grants to local charities and non-profits. Her leadership on the ACF board has certainly contributed significantly to its success.

A nominee of the 2013 Myrtle Everett Woman of the Year by the Business and Professional Woman's Club of Abbotsford, Wendy's philosophy is that hard work and persistence will produce positive results and that she should give her very best to every endeavor. She supports a vast number of community services and fundraisers as a contributor, attendee, and consumer. Wendy is an unfailingly generous community member, but so modest that many are unaware of her profound contributions.

**Joanne Field, 2016 Order of Abbotsford** - *In recognition of her passionately advocating for the youth of Abbotsford, Joanne is being honored with the Order of Abbotsford.*

Joanne Field is a passionate and tireless advocate for youth, ensuring they have the best educational opportunities possible, and helping them become the very best they can be as outstanding community members with successful careers ahead of them. Whenever she has seen injustice for our younger generation, she has been their champion to improve the situation.

From 1996 to 2011 Joanne served as Trustee on the Abbotsford School Board, during which time she was an enthusiastic listener to youth and their needs, advocating for the best kind of education

possible for them. Joanne served as School Board Chair for 4 years, was a member of the Mayor's Crime Reduction Task Force, Abbotsford Youth Commission Board of Directors, School District No. 34's Drug Prevention Committee, New Beginnings Advisory Committee, and the City of Abbotsford's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. In 1998 she was a catalyst for and founding member of the Abbotsford Restorative Justice and Advocacy Association (ARJAA), which now services as a Community Accountability Program under the B.C. Ministry of Justice. From 2001 through to 2012 she served on the Board of Directors and is still involved in the organization today. In 2012, Joanne became the Executive Director of ARJAA, a position she still holds. Highlights during this time include Abbotsford Restorative Justice being awarded the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Non-Profit Organization of the Year, and the recipient of the newly established Dr. Liz Elliott Justice Memorial Award for community safety and crime prevention from the Ministry of Justice, Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division, including recognition for innovative partnerships and advancing the work of restorative justice, bringing caring and respectful services to victims, offenders and their communities.

Joanne is also a passionate advocate for Character Abbotsford, a society dedicated to challenging citizens and organizations to intentionally practice and promote character daily. Joanne understands that "it takes a village" to raise a child and strives for our whole community to be a city that shows integrity and is a fine example to youth. Integrity has always been at the core of Joanne's mindset, and as such she is the kind of example that youth can look up to as an extraordinary person of character, and one they can exemplify. With empathy at heart, Joanne has always been a keen and active listener to the younger generation, as opposed to someone who only "told" them how they should be. She truly cares about youth and what they need, understands them, and helps them thrive.

Joanne's attitude and approach to problems has always been very positive. Even when faced with daunting challenges, she takes them on with a smile on her face. She is a teacher, leader, cheerleader, visionary and influencer. Joanne inspires others to give their best and contribute. She is unpretentious and relentless in her commitment to repair the harm, restore the relationships, and rebuild the community. Her heart goes into every moment of the day, making our community better, one person, and one situation at a time.

Joanne's enthusiasm is infectious and relentless. Since the inception of ARJAA in 2001, she walks the talk every day. Joanne is an active Rotarian and is also the 2007 recipient of the Abbotsford Community Leader Award. She has helped to make a profound impact on the youth of our city as a champion of both Restorative Justice and Character Abbotsford, passionately advocating for funding and leading by example to create brighter futures for generations to come.