

Kanata EMC

Bridlewood Olympic hopeful wins community sport award

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Sarah Kelford, Kanata EMC

Bridlewood resident and track athlete Esther Akinsulie was presented with the Paul van Steen Sports Achievement Award by Margaret Kellaway, the second vice president of the Bridlewood Community Association and chair of the sports committee. Akinsulie accepted her award at the BCA's annual general meeting on Oct. 20.



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president Melva Peever, secretary Brenda Merkley, second vice president Margaret Kellaway, and treasurer Dave Hall. The executive was nominated and voted in at the BCA's annual general meeting on Oct. 20.

EMC News - The Bridlewood Community Association honoured Bridlewood resident Esther Akinsulie with the Paul van Steen Sports Achievement Award at its annual general meeting on Oct. 20 in recognition of her pursuit of sporting excellence.

The Carleton University graduate and track athlete won gold in the 4 x 400-metre relay and silver in the 400-metre at the World Inter-University Games this past July in Belgrade, Serbia. She is hoping to earn a position on the Canadian Olympic team for 2012.

"We are very proud to recognize Esther's accomplishments in honour of Paul van Steen," stated Melva Peever, BCA President. "Bridlewood is a great place to work, live, and play and we believe in demonstrating this by recognizing the efforts of our residents who excel in different ways."

Akinsulie was awarded a keepsake trophy and a \$100 cash award, as well as a commemorative trophy, which will be inscribed with the winner's name each year and kept in the Eva James Community Centre display cabinet.

The Paul van Steen Sports Achievement Award was created this year by the BCA in memory of a dedicated community member and volunteer who helped establish and support sports programs in Bridlewood across many age groups and levels.

The goal of the award is to recognize excellence in competitive or demonstrative sport by a permanent resident of Bridlewood over the age of 16.

Paul Van Steen moved to Bridlewood in 1979 and helped establish the Bridlewood Spring Sports Program for children aged five to 12 years old. This program offered an eight-week league of both soccer and softball.

He also led the establishment of community run outdoor ice rinks throughout Bridlewood, organized winter carnival events (cross country ski races, snow sculptures, broomball games), Bridlewood Canada Day activities and was a driving force behind the Bridlewood Men's Hockey league.

He passed away suddenly in 2007 while renewing his hockey refereeing certification. Paul was also heavily involved with the Bridlewood Community Association and assisted with Park Development as well as coordinating the Outdoor Rink Program for many years. Paul's legacy lives on in the Spring Sports program which now serves over 750 children every spring, the Bridlewood Men's Hockey league which is a men's non-contact hockey league and the 9 volunteer-run outdoor rinks in Bridlewood.

The BCA is in its 31st year and is a voluntary community based organization whose primary purpose is to serve as a voice on behalf of Bridlewood residents on a number of important issues. Lead by a team of committed volunteers who appoint members annually to an executive committee, the BCA provides feedback and advice on a number of City of Ottawa programs, initiatives, policy directions and decisions.

The BCA also operates a number of committees in the areas of community safety and crime prevention, sports, development and membership.

These committees report to the BCA executive and partner with other committed members to ensure that Bridlewood remains a thriving community where residents come together to work, live and play.