

# Chamberlain champions city

## Citizen of the Year leads by example

STORIES BY RACHEL DE LAZZER

He transformed a company and now he's transforming Hamilton.

Mark Chamberlain's success, first in the business world, then in Hamilton's poverty sector, has launched him to the front of poverty reduction efforts in the city and won him the Distinguished Citizen of the Year for 2007.

He received the Royal Bank-sponsored award at Liuna Station last night, beating out five other nominees in what was a very close race, said Dan McLean, news anchor with CHCH News, and one of five judges and spokesperson for the selection panel. Chamberlain edged out the others with his extensive involvement in poverty reduction, said McLean.

"It's the amount of time and work he puts into so many different programs."

He was presented the award by Mayor Fred Eisenberger.

Chamberlain, who runs Trivaris Ltd., told the crowd of a few hundred people that being named citizen of the year was a "tremendous honour."

He thanked his family, the award sponsors, judges and his fellow nominees.

"We're not competing," Chamberlain said. "What we do is complimentary."

He said his work on reducing poverty has shown him Hamilton knows how to work together in tackling a problem.

Chamberlain was president and CEO of Wescam, where he led a one-person, \$1-million business to a 550-person, \$166-million runaway success. He now runs Trivaris Ltd.

Through his involvement as chair of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, he spearheaded a report called Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child, the result of a year's worth of research and community feedback.

In addition, he also chairs the Hamilton Civic Coalition, the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Golden Horseshoe Innovation Alliance.

He's met with government officials to talk



Mayor Fred Eisenberger, left, presents Mark Chamberlain with Distinguished Citizen of the Year award.

SHERYL NADLER, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

about poverty and those who nominated him and wrote letters of support say he raises the city's profile wherever he travels outside the city.

He's also a partner with Options for Homes, a nonprofit group that provides quality, affordable housing for low-income earners and is a member of the Affordable Housing Flagship. According to those who wrote letters of support, he's always looking for ways to ensure "everyone in Hamilton has a home."

Through his current company, Trivaris, he mentors young entrepreneurs, says Carolyn Milne, president and CEO of the Hamilton Community Foundation.

"He has this ability to take a very complex issue (like poverty) and to speak to it in a way that is both from his heart, but also using his extraordinary intelligence in laymen's terms in helping other community members, business members — many of the sectors in our community understand those complexities, and what the possible solutions are," she said.

Milne says his sense of humour and humility help make him a successful leader.

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— With files from Daniel Nolan

## Megan Meredith is a young 'dynamo'

Nearly 50 east end kids were climbing the walls while they waited for a fashion show practice to get under way last September. But Megan Meredith had them busy in no time.

The co-chair of the Youth Advisory Council with the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction had someone start a face-painting activity, while she had other kids start up a song.

"She's got this sense of moving into something and instinctively knowing what to do," said Linda Hughes, an adult adviser with the Youth Advisory Council.

The Grade 12 student at Westdale Secondary School is the Youth Volunteer of the Year for 2007. The award, sponsored by The Hamilton Spectator, names an outstanding volunteer under age 19. It was presented at a gala event hosted by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce last night at Liuna Station.

Meredith, 17, is visiting her sister, who is

teaching English in China, and was unable to attend. Her award was picked up by her friend Jordan Bury, 17, also a Grade 12 student at Westdale.

He was going to communicate her win to her via the Facebook Internet site. Bury said Megan would be "ecstatic" with the honour, considering the other students she was up against.

"She'll be happy about this, but modest," he said.

Bury, who met Megan at a charity restaurant event at the high school, described her as someone special.

"She's a very caring person," he said. "She has a lot of energy. She quit her job so she could do more volunteer work."

Dan McLean, spokesperson for the selection panel of five, called Megan a dynamo.

"She has done more in her few years than most people have done in a lifetime. Every time I turn around, she's involved in something."

She led the Hamilton Youth Voice Against Poverty committee through its development, part of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction.

She was also part of a United Nations' video last year on adequate housing and a documentary and community development project called "Home Safe" with the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Last November, she was a youth panellist at the national conference that focused on children and youth development.

She was a founding member and is now an adviser to the Ryerson Middle School Social Action Club and the leader for organizing dance clubs at two elementary schools.

Chamber CEO John Dolbec said the race was especially tight for the youth volunteer awards and included a record number of 17 nominees — six is typical most years.

## Maddie's legacy lives on with chamber award

Maddie Babineau made such an impact in her short 15-year life that a special one-time-only award was presented in her honour last night.

Although nominated for the Youth Volunteer of the Year award, the judging committee asked the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce board of directors to present a Special Recognition Award for the girl who died in May of a rare form of cancer.

"It was felt her lifetime achievements, especially since her life was so short, were so far and above the rest of the pack of nominees ... it wasn't really fair to the rest to consider her in the same group," said chamber CEO John Dolbec.

Maddie epitomized kindness, said

Dan McLean, anchor with CHCH News and spokesperson for the selection panel of five judges.

"She was always thinking of others and doing what she could to help other people."

She started her philanthropy when she was just four, raiding her piggy bank to give some money to the MS Telethon.

At age 12, she was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer called Ewing's Sarcoma that took her through 11 months of chemotherapy, seven weeks

of daily radiation and extensive surgery.

She still finished Grade 8 and got her class involved in walking in the Relay for Life, raising thousands for cancer research in 2005. She took part despite not having fully recovered from the treatment.

When the Children's Wish Foundation gave her a wish, she gave that wish away.

Watching TV in hospital, she had seen children living in Africa in severe poverty so she used her wish to build a school there.

When her cancer returned and she underwent treatment in hospital again, she started selling jewellery from her hospital room to raise more

money for a well to go with the school in Africa.

"I was thrilled," said her mother, Sharon, talking about the moment she learned of the award.

"Of course, it's bittersweet but wonderful to know that my daughter's legacy is going to live on."

"This recognition allows us to talk about her and what she's done. I don't think she really understood at the time."

Sharon says she is constantly getting letters in the mail from children and adults saying Maddie changed them by her example.

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Maddie

### Citizen of the Year Award finalists

**Chris Ecklund, entrepreneur, Canadian Process Serving Inc.**

Ecklund donated the Tiger-Cats bus, founded the Allison Park neighbourhood association and donates the services of his web design company to many organizations.

**Teresa Hartnett, director of family ministry, diocese of Hamilton**

Hartnett is known for her commitment to Birthright and Catholic Family Services and as a council resource person for the Hamilton Catholic District School Board.

**Murray Martin, president and CEO, Hamilton Health Sciences**

Martin provided a fresh vision for redeveloping acute-care sites and spearheaded HHS's research revival.

**Sam Mercanti, president and CEO, Carstar Automotive Canada**

Mercanti is chair of St. Joseph's Healthcare, founder of the Charity of Hope and, with his franchises, donated \$1.5 million to cystic fibrosis.

**Dr. Nathalie Yan, traditional Chinese medicine doctor**

Yan is an advocate for health and wellness who has given more than \$20,000 worth of medical care to those in financial need.

### Hamilton Spectator Youth Volunteer of the Year finalists

**Matthew Bergen, Cathedral High**

Bergen is active on his school's student council, food drives, Outreach Committee, Christmas Miracle campaigns, silent auctions and in raising money for Third World countries.

**Jordan Bowman, Saint Mary Catholic Secondary School**

Active at school and St. Augustine's Church, Bowman also organized many scouts overnight camping trips and fundraising campaigns, participated in a relief project that took students to the Dominican Republic and in a walk to raise money for Haiti.

**Yasaman Karimianpour, Cathedral High School**

Karimianpour is involved in piano recitals at local nursing homes, assists Grade 8 students in adjusting to high school, has volunteered with the Cancer Assistance Program and at Westmount Recreation Centre.

**Pauline Nichol, Cardinal Newman Secondary School**

Nichol visits residents, runs bingo and organizes events at Pine Villa/New Village Nursing Home. She's also been a Terry Fox participant, a library reading buddy/tutor, took part in her school's pilgrimage walk to raise funds for the Dominican Republic and helped children build their self-confidence.

**Jennifer Pratt, Waterdown District High School**

Pratt brought True Sport (a national initiative to bring respect and integrity back to sports) to her school, then the school board and finally the Flamborough community. She is a mentor in the Athletes to Athletes program for elementary schools, coaches community basketball and volunteered at the Tiger-Cat food drive.

— Rachel De Lazzar