

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release



May 23, 2007

Health-care professionals recognized for exceptional volunteer contributions in Africa

Two extraordinary British Columbian health-care professionals will be awarded the BC Pharmacy Association's prestigious Award of Excellence at the Annual Pharmacy Conference in Kelowna for their exceptional volunteer efforts to improve health-care for people with HIV and AIDS in Africa.

Pharmacist Anna Callegari and retired nurse Beth Gessinger devoted themselves to improving the quality of life of patients affected by HIV and AIDS in Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique. Raising nearly \$30,000, the two women travelled to Africa to assist health professionals at five different health facilities.

"These two health-care professionals are inspiring, both for the work they have done and their determination to do more," said Marnie Mitchell, CEO of the BC Pharmacy Association. "They are truly deserving of this rarely awarded distinction."

As health professionals with resources and expertise that the area is in dire need of, the two women were determined to make a difference and ease suffering. They will receive the award on May 25th at the Annual Awards Dinner.

The Award of Excellence recognizes exemplary and outstanding work and/or achievement by a group, organization, or individual for their professional dedication and humanitarian distinction in support of bettering the lives of others. It is awarded in exceptional cases and has only been won once before by the BC Centre for Disease Control for their role in preventing the spread of SARS virus in Western Canada.

Following the presentation of the award the winners will make a short presentation on their experience, and discuss the opportunities available for other health professionals to volunteer their time and expertise.

Where: Grand Okanagan Lakefront Resort and Conference Centre
Okanagan Room
1310 Water Street, Kelowna

When: 8:30 pm

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