

March 24 2010

Submission to the NCRA

ERIN RADIO NOMINATION FOR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

On behalf of community station Erin Radio CHES 101.5, located in Erin Ontario, I wish to nominate Erin Montgomery for the volunteer of the year award.

Erin has been with Erin Radio for the past 4 years, and while her early work at the station was extremely productive and valuable, it is in the last year that Erin has really blossomed into a superb leader of the Erin Radio team.

Erin now sits on the Erin Radio board as Chair of the Programming Committee and Volunteer Coordinator. In addition, she hosts her own early morning program, while managing the day to day operation of the station as Station Manager.

These are the dry facts, but they in no way convey the depth and breadth of her contribution to the station, and to her community at large. So let's flesh it out a bit:

First and foremost, radio is about what you put on the air, and every weekday morning, Erin opens up the station bright and early at 6:30 to do her morning show - 'The Erin Eyeopener'.

The show employs a fairly standard morning show model - a mix of music, news, local event promotion, and interviews.

From 7am to 9 am, Erin is the very model of a fine morning show host, combining an upbeat and positive manner without going over the top with forced energy. With her warm and engaging style, Erin makes on air guests feel at home right away. It is all very relaxed and confident, and funny. Erin has a great sense of humor and a rapier wit to match. It is a seemingly effortless performance every morning, but anyone who has produced and hosted their own show knows how much hard work and preparation goes into a good radio program.

When her show ends, Erin turns her attention to the station as a whole. As Station Manager, Erin has to deal with a myriad of issues and problems that come up in any organization, and she does so with energy and intelligence, bouncing back from any frustrations and setbacks quickly.

There is no task or challenge that Erin will not tackle. Like any good leader, she never asks anyone to do anything that she is not prepared to do herself. I have seen her vacuum, take out the garbage and clean the toilet many times. She inspires others to give their all as well.

As Volunteer Coordinator, Erin is responsible for the dozens of great volunteers at Erin Radio. Of course the creation of a happy environment for volunteers takes special interpersonal skills, because everyone is there by choice. Erin makes

each person feel like an indispensable part of the team, encouraging and praising at every opportunity. As a result, Erin Radio has a very low volunteer drop off rate. New recruits generally stay, in no small part because of Erin's infectious enthusiasm and wise efforts at inclusion.

Many volunteers want to become show hosts. In her position as Chair of the Programming Committee, Erin considers all potential show ideas fairly, vetting them for suitability and compliance with CRTC regulations. Erin is the intermediary between the Board and the eager and creative volunteers, some of whom have fragile egos and no previous broadcast experience.

Every host must learn how to run the fairly complex automation software, and the On Air studio board, because there is no engineer on hand to run the technical side of things at Erin Radio. In addition, hosts must learn how to speak on the radio, and learn all the details associated with constructing a balanced broadcast. Erin has mastered all these elements herself and she freely shares her wealth of knowledge and experience, taking time to help any host with any problem.

In addition, Erin understands the importance of the word 'community' in community radio. Erin is constantly networking with local businesses, charities and political leaders. She always encourages people to become involved with Erin Radio and to use it to get their message out. Erin organizes live on site broadcasts of various local events throughout the year. It is all about including the community in our little radio station.

You could say that Erin has helped turned the station into a never ending town hall meeting place, and what more could you want from a community radio station! Erin Radio is the heart and soul of the town of Erin, and Erin Montgomery is the heart and soul of Erin Radio.

I could go on and on but I think you get the picture, and I would like to add one more thing in closing:

Erin Montgomery came to Erin Radio as a volunteer in 2006. At the start of 2008, Erin was promoted to Station Manager, and with the help of a provincial government grant, she became a paid, full time employee of Erin Radio. The grant ran out at the end of 2008. However Erin continued and even expanded her commitment to the station as an unpaid volunteer once again, and she continues her service to this day.

On behalf of the Erin Radio team, thank you for your consideration.

Philip Taylor

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