

May 9, 2011

Nomination for Community Radio Legend Award
c/c NCRA head office, 608-180 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, ON, K2P 1P5

To the selection committee:

gretchen king just retired from a decade of coordinating community news at radio ckut. she left an incredible legacy behind her, including celebrating the 9th annual homelessness marathon just a week ago - an event that brings the voices of the homeless, so often talked about but so infrequently talked to, to the airwaves for 14 hours overnight. it started with a member of the overdale squat, a father with two kids who spent much of his time without a stable roof. he mentioned he wanted to make radio and gretchen made a promise to him that they would create 14 hours of people powered radio on the streets, on one of the coldest nights of the year. she kept that promise, hosting the full 14 hours herself the first year, and by the 9th year there are multiple hosts for every hour, including native youth who themselves suffering from homelessness hosting the midnight to 1am open mic hour. by busting ass, she's managed to get the marathon on over forty stations across the country, with some stations even taking on hosting some of the hours themselves.

gretchen's accomplishments and contributions to her community are hard to summarize. she's the main impetus behind groundwire, a country-wide, grassroots, alternative news program, the first of its kind, produced by different campus/community stations, featuring social justice focused reports brought to the airwaves by independent producers from all corners of canada. through this project, gretchen's worked to developed many campus/community station news department and fought tooth and nail to get more funding for marginalized stations.

gretchen also helped set up and kept running a number of regular projects at the radio station working with a number of marginal populations. she enforced a culture of acceptance, and encourages people to fight for their rights and self-empowerment. every month, a group of adults with physical and intellectual disAbilities, produce an hour of radio focused on disAbility news - another topic rarely touched in the mainstream. she worked with Kader Belaouni, a visually impaired refugee originally from algeria, who sought asylum in a church for 3 years. they produced an hour every month, broadcasting live from the church, making it the only time he was able to break the physical confines of the church walls. she also worked to get a grant to create a radio room at the inter-tribal youth centre, allowing them to remotely host a radio show from their centre. gretchen has recorded at countless events and conferences and has done even more interviews.

beyond radio work, gretchen was part of the centre social autonome in her neighbourhood of point st. charles, seeking to squat and build an alternative community centre. gretchen is part of radical school, bringing classes, speakers and creating various opportunities to the montreal community. she's hosted endless events, the most recent with jordan flaherty, community organizer in new orleans and author of "floodlines." gretchen has created autonomous media rooms at the anarchist bookfair for many years, teaching anyone interested how to make your own broadcast. she's produced many news reports and documentaries on issues related to palestinian human rights, motherhood, native issues, and beyond.

there's so much more to say about gretchen. she's a mother of two small girls - meaning she was extremely pregnant twice while she stayed up all night to help give voice to the homeless. she organized many national conferences on media democracy and for the national campus/community radio community. she's a hard ass, and as sweet as honey, and finds a way to make anyone who comes her way part of the team, no matter what their skills, or lack there of. she's a believer - believing that another world is indeed possible and she's going to work til she drops to help bring it to fruition. she never complains, even when she was barely making ends meat, with a small kid and a new baby, working and her partner is stuck in syria, targeted by canadian immigration and not allowed to return, indefinitely. she's housed a number of people for free who were down on their luck, keeping many people safe and afloat.

it seems if this keeps going, it may never end, because gretchen herself never stops finding ways to work for the greater good, and in collaboration with the people who get the most shit thrown at them, always with a smile and a snide comment to make people laugh.

the woman is incredible. talk of the town. please consider her for this award. her eligibility is an understatement.



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