

Greetings 2012 Awards Committee,

Simply put, Chad Saunders has squeezed a lifetime of commitment, work, and dedication into his 20+ years at CJSW. If not swallowed whole, a portion of every minute of every one of his waking days has been given to our station and community-driven radio as a whole. Through his hard work, dedication, and sacrifice, Chad has not only molded CJSW into a successful and stable organization, but has positively influenced campus and community radio across the country. I firmly believe that Chad Saunders is worthy of the Community Radio Legend/Lifetime Achievement Award.

Chad's passion for community-driven radio was obvious from the day he entered our station. As a more-than-awkward high school kid, he was drawn to the crazy atmosphere that was and still is CJSW. He quickly started programming and remains on the air to this day as host of what has become a Calgary institution, My Allergy to The Fans.

Like a mic buzz that just won't go away, Chad stuck to CJSW. Through the years, Chad has operated as a: volunteer, board member, programmer, programming director, station manager, NCRA board member, and all-round advocate for community-driven radio.

Chad found success in all of his roles at our station, but it was during his 11-year tenure as station manager that he left his biggest imprint. On the day he took over as manager, there was a note left on his desk from his predecessor. It included two bits of important information. First – our tower lease was up in less than two months with absolutely no plan. Second – he was sorry.

Like many campus/community radio stations a soon-to-expire tower lease was just one of many challenges. Throughout the years CJSW has been plagued by: outdated equipment, a small staff constantly stretched thin, an even smaller office, a confrontational Student's Union, not to mention a budget lacking zeros in the right places.

“Good enough” is a phrase that has never passed Chad Saunders' lips. He never faced these challenges; he always looked past them, ensuring that they would never rear their head again. There are countless examples of the calibre of his vision, but two in particular stand out: the success of CJSW's funding drive and our expansion and move to a new space.

Under Chad's guidance, our funding drive totals grew to a consistent \$200 000 level. That's \$200 000 collected, consistently since 2006. This funding drive success is a testament to Chad's ability as a manager and advocate for community-driven radio. He was innovative; bringing in fresh and talented local artists to design slogans and artwork. He was organized; reshuffling staffing to accommodate funding drive. He was inspirational; rallying community partners, listeners, and programmers to CJSW's cause. His desire to permanently solve CJSW's problems drove this funding drive success. Equipment issues were solved. Staff numbers were increased. Outreach to the community was expanded. And, in 2009, we were able to fulfill our ultimate goal.

The new space was always Chad's dream. He knew that a fresh, state-of-the-art station was what CJSW and Calgary wanted, needed. The new station on the 3rd floor of Mac Hall at the University of Calgary is a radio mecca. It's a massive space - approximately 4 000 square feet of community radio magic. It includes: three production rooms stocked with brand new, state-of-the-art production equipment, an on-air booth with all the bells and whistles, three separate offices for growing staff numbers, a performance studio for musicians, and a massive common area for station members to mill-about. Let's not forget about the windows and fresh air(!), something foreign to those of us familiar with the tucked away, "basement" nature of campus and community radio stations.

I strongly believe that Chad's management and success at CJSW alone warrants this honour. If radio were a fishbowl and our successes and failures stopped at the water line, Chad Saunders is still a worthy nominee. But community radio doesn't exist in isolation, and no one knows this better than Chad Saunders. Chad has been a constant and vocal advocate for community-driven radio worldwide. The man just does not stop talking, moving, shaking - all for the sake of radio. He's constantly sharing his (and our) successes and failures with the community at large. Whether it be over a beer at annual NCRC's or through countless long-winded and passionate phone calls, Chad has been a cornerstone, database, and inspiration for radio junkies across Canada.

In April of this year, Chad Saunders stepped down as CJSW's Station Manager after an incredible 11-year run. He was showered with accolades, dedications, media coverage, musical tributes, and parties in his honour. Over 75 individuals called the "Thank Chad Voicemail

Hotline”, leaving heartfelt messages.¹ I have included these messages as part of our nomination package. In an unprecedented move, the CJSW Board of Directors dedicated our entire music library to Chad. I firmly believe that he is worthy of these accolades, just as he is worthy of the Community Radio Legend/Lifetime Achievement Award.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Burima
Program Director
CJSW 90.9 FM

¹ <http://www.mediafire.com/?s9aqa1qifo29a>