



*The Lake Report wants to help recognize NOTL's Pandemic Heroes — people who have made a difference, big or small, in a positive way. You can help us recognize someone in the community by sending a bit about the person and why they're a Pandemic Hero. Please send your nominations early to editor@niagaranow.com. A special thanks to Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery for providing a bottle of sparkling wine to each of our pandemic heroes. That's the spirit!*

# Pam Farrell

Pam Farrell of St. Davids has been nominated by Win Laar of NOTL as one of our Pandemic Heroes. Here is what Laar said in her nomination:

As a former teacher, Pam grew increasingly aware of food insecurity in the families of many of her students and the existence of food deserts within cities.

When the former Scouts headquarters building in Niagara Falls came up for sale in 2019 Pam bought it with her own money and was granted charitable status for GROW Community Food Literacy Centre.

The GROW market opened Aug. 1, 2020, to members of the community who can demonstrate that they are below the low-income cut-off, sometimes referred to as the “poverty line.”

Now, in the most impoverished area in the entire Niagara region, GROW members shop for healthy, nutritional, fresh produce and non-perishables, as well as eggs, dairy, bread, frozen meats and fish, all at discounted prices. GROW has brought dignity and hope to those who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic and to those who for various reasons are struggling.

Pam believes food is a basic human right. Nether she nor any of the many volunteers working at GROW receive any payment. Plans for when restrictions ease include holding community dinners and cooking classes. Already a sense of community has developed, as people socialize in line while waiting their turn to enter the market, where they are always welcomed with warmth and friendliness.

GROW is at 4377 Fourth Ave. in Niagara Falls. All those who are below the low-income cut-off are welcome to become members.

For more information, go to [www.growcflc.com](http://www.growcflc.com)



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# Anjulika Chand

Anjulika Chand has been nominated as one of our Pandemic Heroes by Penny-Lynn Cookson. Chand, 55, is a front-line respiratory therapist at Etobicoke General Hospital and has more than 27-years' experience in the field.

"A veteran of the SARS epidemic and now hands-on for COVID-19 patients, Anjulika exemplifies the extraordinary courage and commitment necessary for caring for coronavirus patients on a daily basis," Cookson said in her nomination.

Chand, of St. Catharines, is a long-time volunteer and parishioner of NOTL's St. Mark's Anglican Church, having helped with the Cherry Festival for the past three years and serving with the team of volunteers who organized this year's silent auction.

She says she comes from a long line of medical professionals and always dreamed of working with people hands-on.

She said she is "very nurturing" but the work she has done throughout the pandemic, and on a regular basis, is all made possible because of the "incredible" people she works with.

"It's a real team effort. I'm not alone. I have a great team that I work with and that makes all the difference," she said.



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Essential workers



Firefighters

# NOTL

## Pandemic Heroes



Teachers



Front-line workers

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# Sheldon Randall

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's director of operations, Sheldon Randall, who was recently honoured for 25 years of service to the town, is one of NOTL's pandemic heroes.

Randall, who started at the town in 1996 and worked his way up to operations manager, has stepped in on multiple occasions to lead the town administration when needed.

Most recently in 2020, as interim chief administrator, Randall helped lead the town through the first nine months of the global pandemic, working virtually around the clock and adapting to a rapidly changing situation. He and the lord mayor were given emergency powers by council to make decisions in the best interests of the town and Randall used his experience to help ensure NOTL responded wisely to the pandemic.

During a Feb. 22 meeting of council, Lord Mayor Betty Disero praised Randall's role in guiding the town's pandemic response.

"For the first nine months of this COVID-19 pandemic, he tirelessly guided the emergency control group, working hard and pretty well all day, every day to steer our ship through these fairly rocky waters," she said.

"The town staff have watched Sheldon expertly balance work and family life, becoming a role model of a father to Eric and Eva. He is fortunate to have Sandy, his lovely wife, at his side to put up with his shenanigans."

She also gave a shout out to his family dog Banks, the "ultimate heart softener."

"Sheldon is truly a family man, a well-rounded and versatile employee who is always willing to step in where needed. (He is) an intelligent, kind and compassionate member of our senior management team, which is evident in the way our staff adore him," Disero said.



Sheldon Randall worked "tirelessly" during the height of the pandemic, the mayor says. RICHARD HARLEY

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## Niagara EMS



Niagara EMS crews, the Falls Intervention Team and Mental Health and Addictions Response Team at their headquarters in Glendale, Niagara-on-the-Lake. RICHARD HARLEY

Niagara's paramedics deserve recognition as Pandemic Heroes, says retired paramedic educator Rick Chandler.

In nominating the region's paramedics, he noted that every day they respond to calls that involve considerable risk and exposure to COVID-19.

On a typical 12-hour shift, a paramedic might enter

private homes, businesses, long-term care homes, hospital emergency departments and public venues where people do not always practise social distancing, masking, or any of the things that the government outlines in its COVID policies, Chandler says.

Who are the heroes? Everybody who works as a front-line caregiver to those who are exposed or infected with COVID-19 are heroes, he says.

But perhaps the most heroic are the paramedics, doing their job without complaint or recognition, Chandler says. Not one individual, but all of them are heroes.

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# NOTL Pandemic Heroes

## NOTL's pharmacists

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Niagara-on-the-Lake's independent pharmacists have been thinking outside the box since the beginning of this pandemic — which is one of the reasons they have both been nominated as pandemic heroes.

Julie Dyck, owner/pharmacist of Stone Road Pharmacy, says she needed to adapt her service delivery model to meet the needs of her customers while also following frequently changing restrictions and guidelines for maintaining public health and safety.

"Many times when people come into the store now we are their personal shoppers and we'll walk around and grab everything for them. They kind of stay on the welcome mat and we grab the products for them so that way it makes them feel very safe," she says.

Dyck credits her team for keeping the pharmacy in high spirits throughout these uncertain times.

"Every day we just remind ourselves that we're grateful we're able to work and that we still have workplace to come to ... And even though the customers can't see our smiles we joke that they can see the wrinkles in our eyes when we smile," Dyck says.

Sean Simpson, owner of Simpson's Pharmacy, says from the beginning of the pandemic he and his staff have done whatever they could to create a safe environment for every person walking into each of his locations — on Niagara Stone Road and King Street in Old Town.

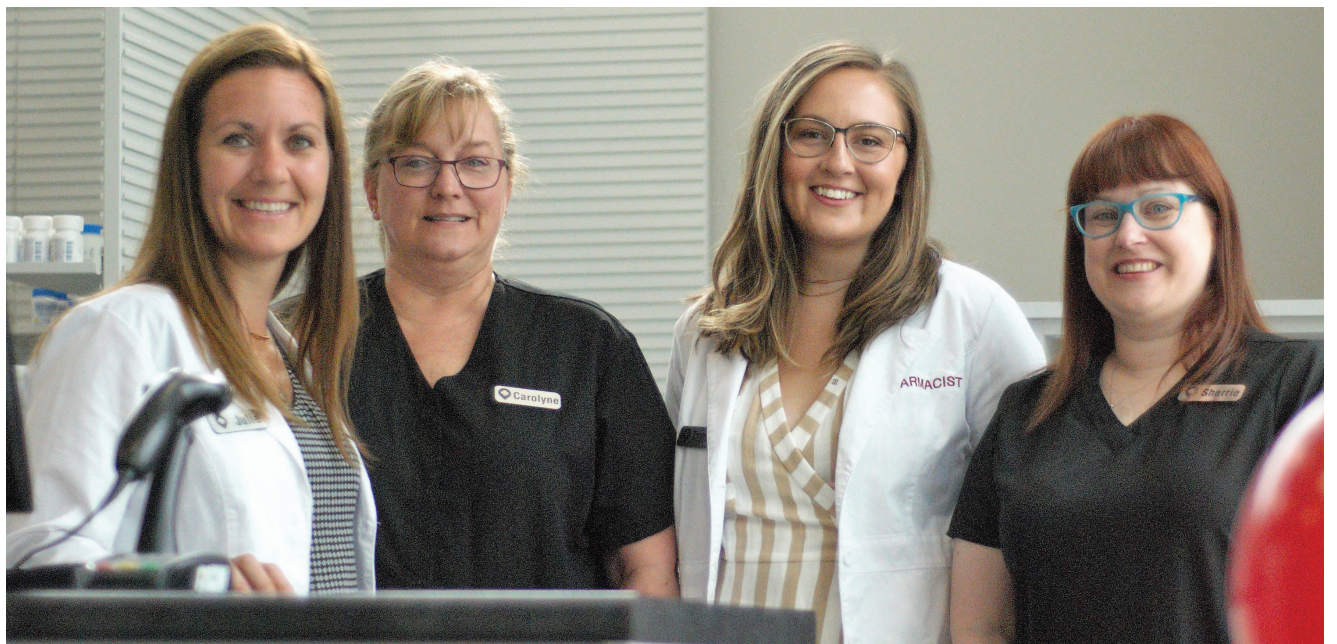
His goal is "to provide people's essential medications and access to our other services in as safe a manner as possible. So that people could continue to get their everyday health care needs looked after, all while feeling safe," Simpson says.

With the help of volunteers, he says he was able to "ramp up" delivery services right from the start. The website was updated to include all of the products offered in store. He says he wanted to offer a better online shopping experience, so customers had access to all of the products they were used to finding in store.

"We're trying to create a safe environment. We added the COVID testing service, which has gone well ... Our mantra is to do whatever we can to create a safe environment but also to provide the products and services that people need," Simpson says.



Sean Simpson, owner of Simpson's Pharmacy. FILE/JESSICA MAXWELL



Julie Dyck and team at Stone Road Pharmacy. FILE/BRITTANY CARTER

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# Ryan Crawford, Paul Harber, David Watt

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Niagara-on-the-Lake's Three Musketeers of giving – Ryan Cochrane, Paul Harber and David Watt – have been nominated as Pandemic Heroes.

Throughout the pandemic, and long before, the three restaurateurs have consistently made efforts to give back to the community and spread positivity.

At the beginning of the pandemic, as advertising revenue began to decline due to closures and lock-downs, Crawford immediately set out to help The Lake Report, recognizing the importance of balanced and accurate local reporting during the pandemic.

He organized a GoFundMe which raised more than \$6,000 to help keep the news coming.

He also collected donations for the paper at his restaurant, Ruffino's Pasta Bar & Grill.

In June 2020, the three helped co-ordinate gift baskets to go to Niagara seniors living in long-term care homes along with Meals on Wheels deliveries.

At the time, Watt, owner of the Garrison House restaurant, told The Lake Report it was the least they could do to help seniors who were isolated in their rooms due to COVID-19.

Crawford echoed his sentiments.

"It's like the elderly are just lonely, sitting by themselves. And sometimes their family can't even visit them, so we just wanted to kind of cheer them up and give them something to enjoy. We want to make them smile. We're chefs and we love making people smile through our food and through gifts through whatever we do," he said.

In September and in February, the three helped raise money for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum by providing food for its reinvented History in the Vineyard fundraiser.

Over the course of the pandemic, these three individuals have gone above and beyond to make our lives just a little bit brighter.

Harber, proprietor of Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery in St. Davids, is widely known as a generous contributor to the community. Besides all his other efforts, he also donated bottles of sparkling champagne to the Pandemic Heroes project.



David Watt, Ryan Crawford and Paul Harber. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY



Ryan Crawford at his restaurant Ruffino's Pasta Bar & Grill. FILE/RICHARD HARLEY

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# The Lake Report





The Lake Report has featured 15 weeks of NOTL Pandemic Heroes. This week's pandemic hero is ...

**YOU**

## A message from The Lake Report

For 15 weeks, starting way back on Feb. 18 and ending on May 27, we celebrated individuals and groups across Niagara-on-the-Lake who were nominated as Pandemic Heroes.

From health care workers to restaurateurs, civil servants to posties, and, finally, our farmers and farm workers, they were all deserving of recognition and celebration.

This week, as you can see on this special Souvenir Edition four-page wrap, we wanted to honour YOU, all the others in the community who have made the essential sacrifices, to stay home, stay healthy and stay safe as much as possible.

As a tribute to our loyal readers, we wanted a unique way to show our appreciation and out of that came the full-page photo mosaic comprised

of hundreds of individual pictures of people from the community. It was painstakingly created by editor Richard Harley and co-sponsored by several community advertisers, including a personal message from Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

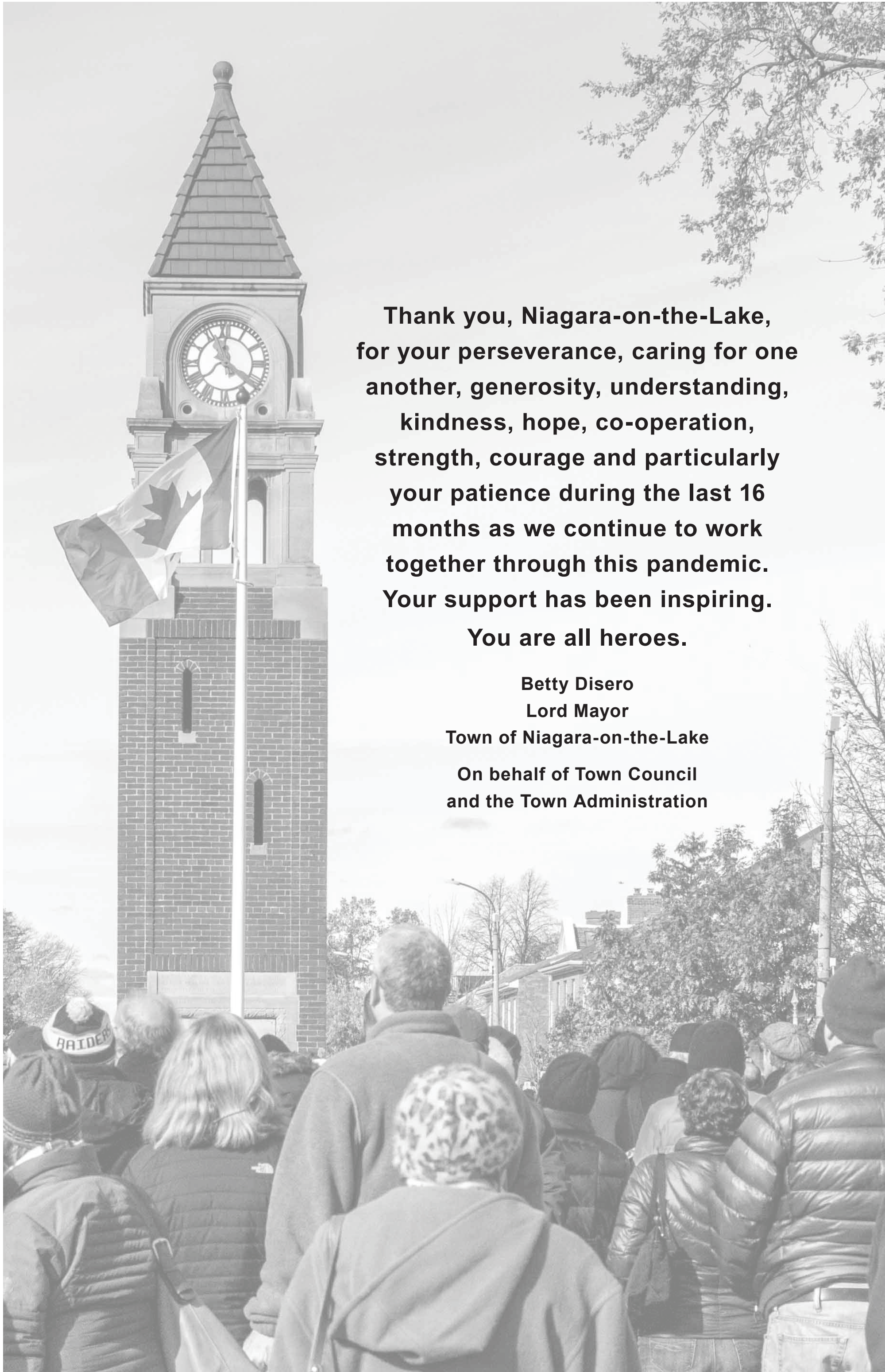
Be sure you view the online version of the page, which should allow you to zoom in on the many individual images.

If you spot yourself or someone you know, let everyone hear about it via our Niagara Now or Lake Report Facebook page.

We finally are in the home stretch of this pandemic, so let's all have a bit of fun and levity. It's not quite over yet, but YOU have already done the hard work to get us this far.

And we think that is something to celebrate.





**Thank you, Niagara-on-the-Lake,  
for your perseverance, caring for one  
another, generosity, understanding,  
kindness, hope, co-operation,  
strength, courage and particularly  
your patience during the last 16  
months as we continue to work  
together through this pandemic.  
Your support has been inspiring.**

**You are all heroes.**

**Betty Disero**

**Lord Mayor**

**Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake**

**On behalf of Town Council  
and the Town Administration**

# To NOTL's Pandemic Heroes

## Thank you for protecting our community

Our worlds have changed. And it seems like it's been constant, with no end in sight. But, thanks to people like YOU, who have made the effort to stay safe and protect others by following public health advice, we're one step closer to finally being through this pandemic. We're starting to see our beloved parks reopening, and soon we'll be able to head out and support our local businesses. While we continue this fight, we want to acknowledge the people who are doing their part, wearing masks, sanitizing, distancing, and keeping public health and safety at the top of their minds.

## Do your part, get vaccinated

If you haven't already, please sign up to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Your vaccination doesn't just protect you, it protects the entire community, country and in turn the entire planet. Book your vaccine at a Niagara public health clinic, area pharmacy or through your doctor. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine>

# The Lake Report



Niagara-on-the-Lake  
**COMMUNITY**  
Palliative Care



Radiant  
Care

