

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community impact sector celebrates 3rd annual Day of Recognition

Full day of events celebrates the depth of impact created by community organizations

May 12, 2023 – **HALIFAX/KJIPUKTUK** – Nova Scotia is once again celebrating the impact of the people who work and volunteer in non-profit organizations across the community sector. The day will include capacity building workshops, a proclamation from the province and the Bhayana Family Foundation Invisible Champion awards.

“Our non-profit organizations and their employees play a vital role supporting people and families, contributing to the quality of life in our communities and many other acts of kindness,” said Premier Tim Houston. “The Day of Recognition is one way we can share our gratitude for the hard work, dedication and commitment of our vibrant non-profit sector.”

The Community Impact Sector Day of Recognition is made possible through a partnership between Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia (IONS), United Way, the Bhayana Family Foundation and the province of Nova Scotia. Together, they’re shining a light on the depth of programs, services, collaborations and partnerships that make life better for thousands of Nova Scotians.

Annika Voltan, executive director of IONS, said programs are just the tip of the iceberg. “A number of benefits we experience today are as a direct result of the sector’s role, which includes important advocacy efforts, trust-building, and community-led solutions,” she said, “Our goal is to surface the essential role that impact organizations play in innovating this province, pushing for change, supporting therapeutic health and wellness, and improving collective quality of life.”

Nova Scotia is home to 7,600 impact organizations, employing 20,000 people and contributing \$679 million to our economy each year. Volunteers contribute 44 million hours to the province annually. “Individuals working in the sector have incredible knowledge and expertise to offer,” said Sara Napier, president and CEO of United Way Halifax. “By serving Nova Scotians, addressing inequities, and influencing public policy, community impact organizations dramatically improve the quality of life of all Nova Scotians.”

Raksha M. Bhayana, CEO of the Bhayana Family Foundation, was an early advocate for the Nova Scotia Day of Recognition. “Our Foundation’s mission is to close the recognition gap for non-profit professionals. We are honoured to have spearheaded this special day for them. Nova Scotia made history in 2020 by being the first province in Canada to proclaim a Community Impact Sector Day of Recognition. In doing so, you have paved the way for other provinces to follow suit,” she said.

In addition to its advocacy role, the Bhayana Foundation gives out Invisible Champion Awards for extraordinary performers. Seventeen individuals and three organizations will receive Invisible Champion Awards to recognize the incredible effort, creativity and empathy they’ve contributed to the sector and the people they serve. Each award winner will take home \$1,000 to use towards personal or professional development.

Since it started this program, more than 1500 nonprofit professionals from 350 organizations across Canada have been recognized. “We are deeply committed to making the Invisible Champions Visible.”

About Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia: Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia (IONS) helps build a better world by recognizing the importance of a more just, equitable, and community-driven approach to re-envisioning our society. As a Community Impact (Nonprofit) Sector advocate, IONS supports, connects, builds capacity for, and amplifies the shared voice and work of the sector. Visit ions.ca to learn more.

About United Way Halifax: United Way Halifax is a local impact organization bridging gaps for people experiencing poverty and marginalization in HRM. Our organization changes lives by providing funding, creating solutions, partnering with others and advocating for change.

About the Bhayana Family Foundation: Incorporated in 2006, the Bhayana Family Foundation partners with United Ways across Canada to close the recognition gap for the human service sector. Their contributions to our society's well-being – and to our economy – are well documented and immense. Yet all too often, the sector and its dedicated professionals are overlooked and undervalued. Our focus is to strengthen the roots of the community-the Invisible Champions of Canadian Communities.

Media Contacts:

Sarah White
United Way Halifax
swhite@unitedwayhalifax.ca
782-234-2504

Lydia Phillip
Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia
lydia@ions.ca
506-878-9933

Bhayana Family Foundation Invisible Champion Award Winners

Individuals

Vanessa Fells - African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition

Shauna Ferrar - Dartmouth Adult Services Centre

Natalie Frederick-Wilson – Centre for Women in Business

Michelle Labine – Couch of HOPE

Mukthar Limpao – L'Arche Cape Breton

Mike Little – TEAM Work Cooperative

Krista Maynard – YWCA Halifax

Gillian Morrissey – The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia

Rafaela Muriel Alarcon – The Clun Inclusion

Abdelkarim Musa - Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

Twyla Nichols – YWCA Halifax

Samantha Paul - Wekope'kwitk Mijipjeweyuo'kuom Society Millbrook Food Bank

Julie Slen – Shelter Nova Scotia

Irma Snyder - Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Literacy Network

Lisa Snyder - LEA Place Women's Resource Cen

Karen Vaughan – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County

Benny Welter-Nolan – Visual Arts Nova Scotia

Organizations

Africadian Empowerment Academy

Parker Street Food & Furniture Bank

Riverview Home Volunteer Association