



# 40 UNDER 40

An annual celebration of 40 people under age 40  
who are doing great things in our community



## Eric Gillis

The list of three-time Olympians in Canadian track and field history is a short one, and Eric Gillis became a member of that elite group when he was selected to run the marathon in Rio de Janeiro. He competed in the 10,000 metres on the track in Beijing in 2008 and ran the marathon in London in 2012. The sixth-fastest marathoner in Canadian history, Gillis was the top Canadian at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon last year. He also won the Canada Running Series.

In the buildup to this year's Rio Olympics, Gillis pulled off an impressive feat at the end of June, winning two 10-kilometre races in one day. He started in the morning by winning the Scotiabank Waterfront 10K in Toronto. That night, he was on the track at the University of Guelph, where he won the Canadian men's 10,000-metre championship as part of the Speed River Inferno track meet.

Gillis, 36, lives in Guelph with his wife and their two children. He has been a leader in putting Guelph on the running

map in Canada and is a great mentor for young athletes in the Speed River Track and Field Club.

"The biggest honour is to be selected with the other 39 individuals. Me doing what I do every day doesn't feel that different, but when I look at what other people are doing, it's an honour to be selected with them. And for a community-based event, to be honoured from the community is an honour. It's nice."

*Nominated by Chris Moulton*



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# CLASS OF 2009 ALUMNI

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# Jerushia Allin



Jerushia Allin has a lot of responsibilities as program supervisor at the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition. The network of neighbourhood groups, sponsoring agencies and partners supports programs as diverse as exercise classes and summer camps all across the city.

During the summer, she trains and supervises summer camp staff at eight neighbourhood group camps. She also sits on a variety of committees and working groups, including the camp council and equity committee.

“I’ve been privileged to go to camp almost my entire life,” Allin said. “I’ve been a camper. I’ve been a leader and co-ordinator. I’ve been a volunteer, camp staff. I’ve done one-to-one work with kids with special needs to make sure that they could access camp programs. Now I’m in a position where I get to support the staff who are in the trenches building relationships with kids. Because my experiences were so positive, I want to make sure that the staff and the kids in the community, that their experiences are positive as well. And I just love camp. It’s one of the happiest places in the world,” the 26-year-old Guelph resident says.

“It’s hard work and each day there’s something that frustrates you and each day there’s something that’s beautiful and amazing. I’m very humbled that the people who nominated me recognized my work and my love for the community.”

“If you were to ask me who we should be keeping an eye on for the next five years, or who I think is going to make a big impact on the City of Guelph and its barriered citizens, I’d assuredly tell you Jerushia is the tip of that spear,” writes her nominator, Bang Ly. “Keeping up with her will be our toughest task.”

*Nominated by Bang Ly*

# Amy Greer

An assistant professor in the University of Guelph Ontario Veterinary College's Department of Population Medicine, Amy Greer is a Canada Research Chair in disease modelling (projecting how infectious diseases progress through a population) and also the co-director of the Decision Centre for Infectious Disease Epidemiology at the University of Toronto. Greer researches infectious diseases in populations, including their introduction, spread and control.

"I use mathematical tools to understand the dynamics of infectious diseases," she says. "Diseases that can be transmitted between people, diseases that can be transmitted between animals and we're also interested in diseases that can go back and forth between people and animals."

She won two awards for her work modelling the progression of the H1N1 flu virus and suggesting vaccination strategies during the pandemic in 2009. She has also made important contributions to the research on whooping cough.

"As a result of her outstanding and wide-ranging skills, and her abilities as a bridge-builder between the human, animal and environmental health communities, she is rapidly building a major research program at Guelph," David Fisman, professor of epidemiology and medicine at the University of Toronto, writes of his colleague.

Greer, 39, came to the University of Guelph in 2014 and lives in the city with her husband and two young children.

"I was quite shocked, actually," Greer said of being named to the 40 Under 40. "I'm new to the University of Guelph. It's a real honour, that's for sure. This community is full of a lot of interesting people doing really cool stuff."

"She's a pretty amazing person," writes Fisman. "Guelph was lucky to grab her!"

*Nominated by Stefanie Sharp*





# Beth Anne Ellipsis

A talented and highly regarded spoken word artist, Beth Anne Ellipsis is a key player in the literary community as founder of Guelph Spoken Word, a not-for-profit organization that has been holding events for eight years.

The organization, where Ellipsis is treasurer, hosts many literary events every month, including poetry slams, open mike nights and workshops. The 32-year-old also supports the poetry slam team, which competes at national competitions.

“She not only performs moving and inspiring works,” writes her nominator,

Erin Aspenlieder, “but she is tireless in encouraging and supporting other artists in their craft.”

Ellipsis also volunteers on the City of Guelph’s river systems advisory committee, which matches up with her professional calling in river protection and restoration for Conservation Halton.

Professionally, Ellipsis calls herself a river mechanic.

“That’s my poetic job description,” the Guelph native said. “My technical title is a watershed restoration technician, but not very many people know what that means.

Pretty much when the river is not healthy, it’s in disrepair. I take a look at it, analyze it and come up with an action plan to fix it and go in and fix it.”

Ellipsis lives in Guelph with her wife and is pleased to be included in 40 Under 40. “It’s pretty cool to be nominated and to have other people in the community say, ‘Hey, thanks.’ It feels like it’s a little pat on the back — get back to it and light the fire,” Ellipsis said. “I think it’s good that Guelph stops to recognize its community champions.”

*Nominated by Erin Aspenlieder*

# Hayley Kellett



Hayley Kellett is an instructor with The Making-Box, Guelph's hub for live comedy and improv education, and directs the Improv Incubator program there. She "uses improv to help both individuals and businesses become more open, happy and productive through improvisational training," writes her nominator, Making-Box co-founder Jay Reid.

"The way I feel about Guelph is that I'm not doing things for the city, I'm doing things with the city," she said. "We're all about building community. The more I'm putting in, the more I'm getting out of it and I feel like it's succeeding together rather than alone. Before it was always working toward a goal independently, whereas now I feel I have an entire city working with me."

"I've done more in Guelph in the time I've been here than I did in a decade in another city. That's a great thing, an awesome thing."

Kellett, 27, has lived in Guelph since July 2015. She has a long history with The Second City as a performer, instructor and puppeteer, mostly in Toronto but also internationally. And, last year, she was nominated for Best Female Improvisor by the Canadian Comedy Awards.

"I feel like more and more this year I've been officially welcomed into Guelph," she said of being included in 40 Under 40. "Having this title and wrestling belt, I guess, I feel like I live here and that I'm from Guelph. I'm in a place that wants to celebrate with each other. That's nice."

*Nominated by Jay Reid*

# Matt McQuade



**M**att McQuade, business development manager at Champion Mortgage Inc., never shies away from helping out wherever he can.

“Because I was born and raised in Guelph, I’ve been able to benefit from all of the greatness of the community and now that I’m in a position where I can give back in some way, that’s been my biggest motivator,” he said.

McQuade, 30, sits on the board of the Chalmers Community Services Centre, which provides emergency food, clothing and support within the community; chairs the Young Professionals Network, which connects young entrepreneurs, professionals and students; volunteers with United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin; and chairs the United Way’s GenNext committee.

“Matt is continually thinking of ways to connect our community while making our city a better place for everyone that calls Guelph home,” writes his nominator, Emma Rogers.

“I’m excited to go out and meet new people, learn new things and give back where I can,” he said. “These events and these programs are fun.”

McQuade and his wife live in Guelph.

“I’m just really excited because so many people I look up to in the city have been on the list at one point or another so to think about myself being included with some of them, well, that was the best part about getting the phone call,” McQuade said of being on this year’s list of 40 Under 40. “It was great.”

*Nominated by Emma Rogers*

# Jaime Power

A consultant with Investors Group and founder of the Guelph Professionals Network, Jaime Power advises people with their financial decisions and connects like-minded individuals in countless projects.

When starting the group for professionals, “I was new to Investors Group and I was new to networking and I needed to grow my network as far as people that could benefit my clients.

“Voltaire has a quote: ‘Could we be so wise as to learn from others?’ I’ve held on to that through my whole career so far. Everyone else’s experiences, what’s worked and what hasn’t worked, have benefited me substantially. Now, because I’ve been here so long and I’ve been through it, I get to do that for other people as well.”

Power, 29, is part of United Way’s GenNext and was the Guelph Wellington Stroke Recovery partners program co-ordinator and sat on that organization’s board of directors.

“Jaime wants to ensure that everyone in our community has equal opportunity to flourish and is always willing to go the extra mile to make it happen,” writes her nominator, Emma Rogers.

Power lives in Guelph.

“It’s such an honour,” she said of being named to this year’s 40 Under 40. “I love helping and I’ve been so lucky to have the opportunity to spend time with the people in the community with my networking group, on boards and committees. I’m lucky to be there. I’m lucky to have the opportunity to learn from all these people. I feel blessed.”

*Nominated by Emma Rogers*



# Lisa Buchanan



A professor of sport management at Humber College, Lisa Buchanan finds teaching her students every day and helping the light bulb go off to be very rewarding.

“Making a difference in others’ lives is hugely exciting for me and it’s just such an honour every day to work with them,” she said.

Buchanan, 37, was a member of the mission team for the Canadian Olympic team at the Vancouver Games in 2010 and is a member of the Canadian Olympic

Committee’s Education, Youth and Community Outreach Committee. She also sits on the board of directors of the Ontario Educational Leadership Centre and chairs its Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

“Sport and physical activity has just been a huge part of my upbringing and life, from playing basketball in the driveway with my brother to all the organized sport I’ve been a part of throughout my life, whether as an athlete, a coach or, now, an administrator,”

she said. “It’s really moulded who I am and I want other people to experience that.”

Buchanan lives in Guelph with her husband and their four children.

“It’s a huge honour,” she said of being named to the 40 Under 40. “This is an incredible community and I think it helps connect us and be really proud of our city and the community that’s here.”

*Nominated by Doug Buchanan*



# Jane Kirby

Jane Kirby feels the rugby gods have been smiling on her as she's always managed to be in the right place at the right time.

She started playing at high school because her friends were playing and their team was short players to go on a tour of the United Kingdom.

Then, she accompanied friends to Team Ontario tryouts because there was room in the car. She made that team and was later selected to be on the Canadian development squad.

Now, the 27-year-old is a national team member, has played in the Women's Rugby

World Cup (where Canada came second, its best finish ever) and plays for the Highland Rugby Club in Fergus.

She has also played for the University of Guelph, where she studied toward her bachelor of arts in geography, and now volunteers as an assistant coach for the Guelph Gryphons.

Kirby is a representative for Aptoella, a women's rugby wear company.

Highland Rugby's Joe Bowley says Kirby is an "inspiration" to the club's younger girls.

"There's just been so much support in the club that at this point I just can't imagine not giving back because it's something I

love so much," she said.

"I only started when I was 14, now you see these six- and seven-year-olds running around and they're so excited about it. If I can give anything back to that, that's great."

"I was surprised more than anything," the Guelph resident said of this recognition. "I've seen the list of 40 Under 40 before and it's a huge honour to be included in that group. Guelph has a huge population with so many people doing amazing things for their community."

*Nominated by Morganne Linthwaite*



# Jason Dudgeon

Jason Dudgeon has touched many lives through his work with people who have developmental disabilities.

“I just want to try to give back,” the former educational assistant said. “That’s my thing.”

One program the 36-year-old has co-ordinated is Cottage Crashers, where participants with special needs get a week at a cottage to do things such as canoeing, swimming, fishing, go-karting and horseback riding.

“I connected with other members in the community and they donated their cottages

so that (participants) would have that experience like we would have when we go to a cottage,” Dudgeon said.

“I try to make it as much like things that we would do and that’s what I loved about it.”

A co-founder of Guelph’s Community of Hearts Life Long Learning Centre, a learning centre for adults who have developmental disabilities, his latest endeavour is the Live and Learn Centre, which aims to prepare special needs people for the challenge of living on their own and supporting themselves.

In 2014, he and the other founders of Community of Hearts were awarded the City of Guelph’s Access Recognition Award.

Dudgeon, who lives in Guelph with his wife and young son, feels he gets as much out of his work as the participants do.

“Even if I was having a bad day and I went into work and I was working with the guys and the girls, I would come out just feeling refreshed,” Dudgeon said.

“You can never have a bad day working with these guys.”

*Nominated by Steve Redmond*

# Jana Burns



Jana Burns, Wellington County's director of economic development, takes the responsibility of supporting and growing local businesses very seriously. She is a board member of the Wellington-Waterloo Community Futures Development Corporation, where she helps local entrepreneurs as they launch or expand their businesses. She sits on the steering committee at Taste Real Guelph Wellington, which supports local food businesses and farms and markets the area as a destination for food tourism.

Burns, 34, is also chair of the Wellington Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and worked with the organization, the local municipality, Upper Grand District School Board and a funding agency to develop a hands-on education program in sustainable agriculture for Centre Wellington District High School students.

"Jana is an incredible person whose passion for community development as an individual and professional continues to have huge impact in our community," writes Taste Real co-ordinator Christina Mann.

Burns has lived and worked in both Germany and South Africa and did her master's in the United Kingdom. She uses her international experience to promote local businesses to a broad audience. She says her perspective on the area changed after living abroad. "It was so cool to come back and see this community in a whole different light," she said.

She and her husband live in Orton and are expecting their first child in September.

Becoming a member of the 40 Under 40 Class of 2016 is "an honour to be recognized by peers that you respect so much. I think that's the biggest thing because I do really respect them so much. Why wouldn't it be them? Why me?"

*Nominated by Scott Wilson*



# Megan McCormick

A professional photographer, Megan McCormick has stayed in her hometown to pursue her career.

Obsessed with taking photos from a young age, McCormick became hooked on photography when she started taking photos with a disposable camera before she was of high school age. She now has her own wedding and portrait photography studio, McCormick Photography, and a studio that targets corporate photography and portraits, called StudioM2. Her photography has appeared in Hello! Canada, Shutter Magazine and The Knot, a wedding magazine. She has also

photographed celebrities, including radio host Todd Shapiro, Miss Universe Canada 2014 and investment banker Brett Wilson, formerly of “Dragons’ Den.”

The 29-year-old also gives her time freely to several charitable organizations.

“It’s very important to me to give back to the community,” McCormick said.

“I was born and raised in Guelph so I want to lend my talent to organizations that do so much for the community and for people in need.”

She’s been involved with organizations including Habitat for Humanity Wellington Dufferin Guelph, Ronald McDonald House,

the Canadian Cancer Society and Smiling Eyes, an organization of professional photographers who offer their services to families that have a member battling a life-threatening disease.

“It’s a huge honour,” she said of being named to this year’s 40 Under 40. “With how much work and heart and soul that I’ve put into my business, it’s such a great compliment and it really makes me feel amazing about everything that I’ve worked so hard to achieve. I’m just very humbled and grateful.”

*Nominated by Todd Hunt*

# JT Potts



The founder and creative director of Stoneboard Consulting, JT Potts helps Guelph companies thrive. She also donates many hours to small businesses and not-for-profit agencies to help them reach their goals.

“I get up every morning and I love what I do,” the 39-year-old said. “It’s fun and it’s creative. I find that I’ve found a way to use business and art in a way that makes me happy and makes other people happy. I help people with their livelihood and their business and make them profitable and happy in their business. That’s what I enjoy.”

“She is a true leader of the creative class,” writes Joel Regts, who has enlisted her help creating hip ad campaigns for his company, IF Footwear Boutique. “She’s a techy fashionista with the business acumen and decorum of a Fortune 500 leader.”

Potts lives in Guelph with her young son.

Being selected for 40 Under 40 is “a privilege and I’m honoured and it makes me happy because I do so much work here and I really want to make a difference in the community.

“Being actually recognized as someone who is here and actively pursuing projects and building Guelph as it is — I think Guelph is a wonderful place — it’s just nice to be recognized in the place where I do a lot of work and that means something to me. I love Guelph.

“I have lived in 19 different places all over southern Ontario and Guelph is still my favourite.”

*Nominated by Joel Regts*

# Jason Thomas



A sessional lecturer in the University of Guelph's Department of Physics, Jason Thomas brings part of his alter ego, the Great Orbax, to the lecture hall.

"I'm definitely an entertainer first and if people happen to learn something as a side-effect of that, then I've done something," the 39-year-old said. "Entertainment has always been my passion, but I don't know why or where that came from."

As the Great Orbax, Thomas and performing partner Sweet Pepper Klopek hold 22 Guinness World Records for such things as having a motorcycle drive over him while lying on a bed of nails. The duo has performed their show, "Monsters of Schlock," at universities across the country and in festivals internationally. Thomas has appeared on several television shows, including "Canada's Got Talent," "Ripley's Believe It or Not" and the Discovery Channel's "Daily Planet."

Thomas, who lives in Guelph, has been passionate about physics and hopes that helps his students learn.

His classes may be entertaining, but Department of Physics chair Paul Garrett says Thomas is a true professional.

"It's a pretty exciting thing to get any sort of recognition by the community, especially in an award or something like this where it's actually being nominated by your peers," Thomas said of being named to this year's 40 Under 40. "Once you leave schooling, you don't get your grades or marks any more and it's kind of difficult to tell whether you're doing anything that's any good. It's nice once in a while for somebody to come by and give you a pat on the back."

*Nominated by Michael Massa*

# Stephen O'Brien

As the City of Guelph's city clerk, Stephen O'Brien feels he has a special relationship with residents.

"I'm fortunate enough to be employed by the people of Guelph," he said. "Ultimately, that's where my employment comes from, but I try to be humble in that in the sense that I really do see my role as serving the community."

O'Brien, 33, has brought innovation to government as he spearheaded an initiative to streamline meeting processes and, more long-term, has been the driving force behind implementing innovative customer service principals.

"We're really trying to streamline and make processes better for the public," O'Brien said.

"People don't care why council is meeting, what's the legislative impetus for it, why they have to go through hoops. They just care what the end decision is going to be. We're trying to find ways here to make that happen. It's not just me. I'm a spoke in the wheel."

O'Brien lives in Guelph with his wife and young daughter.

"I was surprised by it," O'Brien said of being named to the 40 Under 40 class of 2016. "I think it means that there are people who appreciate the role of a good public servant.

"It's a bit of a mixed emotion: surprised and happy and humbled."

*Nominated by Kithio Mwanzia*



# Nathan Skoufis



Guelph native Nathan Skoufis learned perseverance when he was young and it led to him becoming an eight-time world champion in karate.

He started in karate when he was six, but a couple of years later he had thoughts of giving it up, until his parents stepped in.

“I didn’t like going at all and I was ready to quit,” he said. “My parents put it in me that if you start something, give it your best effort and see it all the way through.”

Now the 22-year-old has his own Guelph Family Martial Arts dojo in northern Guelph and is a member of the Hayabusa professional karate team.

“I wasn’t an instant success in martial arts,” Skoufis said.

“Reaching the top in the competitive side of martial arts is a great satisfaction because you know all your hard work is paying off.”

He also gets great satisfaction when one of his students succeeds.

“It’s something I enjoy and I don’t really see it as a job,” he said of teaching. “I’m just trying to help people in their lives. Teaching is one of the best things I’ve ever done, just the positive influence I have on other people’s lives.”

A fourth-year University of Guelph student, Skoufis lives in Guelph.

“It’s kind of a symbol that you’re doing something bigger than yourself within Guelph and that your life means something,” Skoufis said of being in the 40 Under 40. “That’s the biggest thing to me because I’m just trying to make a difference.”

*Nominated by Theo Nikolaidis*



# Korey Jarvis

**K**orey Jarvis started wrestling as a young boy, but he didn't have much success initially. He rarely won a match and was frequently bullied. Still, he continued practising and competing, eventually winning competitions at the national and international levels.

This year, Jarvis earned a spot at the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, the first time he has qualified for the Olympics.

Jarvis, 29, has been competing internationally for nearly 10 years. He won silver in the men's 125-kilogram freestyle class at last year's Pan American Games at Toronto.

And he is a two-time medallist at the Commonwealth Games, winning gold in 2014 and silver in 2010 when he competed in the 96-kilogram class.

Jarvis has shared his story of perseverance with children and youth at local schools. "He challenges people to look at a big picture and not see a loss as defeat, but a way to get better," writes Tom Cako, director of Tri-City Training.

Jarvis, his wife and young daughter live in Guelph.

"This is a huge honour," he said of being named to the 2016 Class of the 40 Under

40. "It kind of inspires me to do a bit more and give a little bit more back and it shows me that I'm kind of doing what I want to do with my sport and doing good for me. Obviously, I've done well. I've made it to the Olympics, but I've tried to do as much as I can giving back. I'm helping coaching and talking to schools and stuff like that. It's an honour and it inspires me to do more, to give back more to this community and other communities around Canada."

*Nominated by Kyle Grant*

# Noah Irvine



A Grade 11 student at Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute, Noah Irvine is trying to focus attention on mental health issues in the country.

He took up the cause after the death of a close friend and has been an advocate for improvements with both current MP Lloyd Longfield and his predecessor, Frank Valeriote.

“We definitely need to push the province and the feds to get federal and provincial money into cities to have mental health treatment centres because they need it,” Irvine said.

Irvine often talks to people suffering from mental health issues that he sees, including one who is often on the city bus that Irvine takes to and from school.

“We fist-bump on the bus,” Irvine said. “When I walk by, he’s fist-bumping and high-fiving because as much as I’m not close to him, I’m probably the only friend or companion that he’s had in years.”

Irvine is also trying to bring awareness to suicide prevention.

“We lose more people to suicide than 9/11,” he said. “We have a 9/11 in this country every year and we don’t seem to recognize that.”

At 16, Irvine is “already displaying the qualities of citizenship that are an example to Canadians of all ages,” says Longfield.

Irvine lives in Guelph.

“It’s a pretty proud moment. It feels good that you’re doing something in your city and that people definitely respect (that),” he said of being named to this year’s 40 Under 40 class. “It’s definitely a good feeling and it’s definitely a reward for a lot of hard work.”

*Nominated by Lloyd Longfield*



# Kate Andrews

A Grade 8 student at St. Ignatius of Loyola, Kate Andrews doesn't like to just sit back, she likes to take action.

She was struck by the photo of the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned when the inflatable boat he and his family were in capsized as they were trying to flee to Europe.

"I'd been watching the news with my parents," she said. "It triggered something in my heart. I just felt terrible and I said, 'I need to do something about this.' I talked to my dad and I thought writing a letter to the Toronto Star would be a good way

to let my voice be heard and try to make a difference." She also wrote to Canada's immigration minister about the crisis and donated \$50 to the Red Cross campaign.

When she was eight and wanted a dog, Andrews proved she would be a good dog owner when she started her own dog-walking business.

"I put posters up because I wanted to show I was responsible, so I started my own Kate's Dog Walking business," she said. "A few of my posters got attention and I started connecting with some of my mom's friends and got walking some dogs."

Andrews, 13, is also a rep soccer player and has taken up volleyball in the last year. At school, she plays soccer, baseball and badminton and is a member of the school's Social Justice Team, Student Council and Healthy Schools Committee. She also volunteers with Hope House and the City of Guelph's annual Earth Day cleanups.

"I feel really honoured that I was chosen," she said of being named to the 40 Under 40. "I'm happy to represent the youth in Guelph."

*Nominated by Karla Andrews*



## Sarah Willson and Shawn Vickar

University of Guelph students Sarah Willson and Shawn Vickar are overwhelmed by the response to their Humans of Guelph Facebook page.

The pair started the page late in 2014 and, after enduring a slow start, it has taken off to become one of the most popular “Humans of” pages based at Canadian universities. They use it to raise awareness of issues and get certain stories published. Individuals, including the mayor, a Holocaust survivor and a Pan Am Games medallist, share what matters to them.

“We just started awkwardly going up to people in the library and asking if we could take a picture of them and talk to them about something personal,” Willson said. “We got a lot of rejection at the beginning,

but over time it’s sort of become more of an established, recognized page, so over time people are reaching out to us.”

“The best and most rewarding part of this whole journey has been receiving messages like, ‘This post has really helped me with my struggles and made me realize that I’m not alone,’” Vickar said.

“Those types of things make everything that we’re doing worthwhile because we don’t earn a cent for what we do, it’s kind of just to give back to the community and it’s really rewarding to see that type of reaction.”

Willson, 20, and Vickar, 21, will both be heading into their fourth year of study at the University of Guelph this fall and they’ve known each other since their high

school days in Toronto.

“I’m just so honoured to have been recognized,” Willson said. “We’ve been working on this project, Humans of Guelph, for quite a while so it’s really nice to be recognized as being part of this great group of people and to be in the same category as other people who’ve done so many great things and made great contributions to the community. We’re really proud of everything we’ve done with Humans of Guelph and we’re happy that it’s been recognized as a great contribution.”

“It’s my proudest accomplishment. Out of 120,000, just to be picked, that’s a crazy thing. It just means a lot,” Vickar said.

*Nominated by Jacqueline Murray*

# Julia Nguyen



An Ontario Veterinary College student, Julia Nguyen spent her summer in rural Kenya with Veterinarians Without Borders, helping farmers there develop sustainable dairy practices and make the most of resources available to them. The trip also involved visits to local schools for talks with the students and it allowed Nguyen to experience international development work.

The 26-year-old is passionate about making a difference in the lives of humans and animals. Her goal follows the One

Health Initiative, which recognizes the health of humans is dependent on the health of animals and the environment.

Nguyen became interested in animal medicine and production after living and working on a farm in New Hampshire in 2013. After graduating, she hopes to have a mixed or food animal practice.

“I am humbled and flattered to be nominated and receive the recognition, but way beyond that I hope it will bring more exposure to Veterinarians Without

Borders and have their projects be even more successful with the support of the Guelph community. I also hope it will allow other great students and faculty at the Ontario Veterinary College to be recognized for the outstanding work they do in the community, and for their efforts to improve animal, human and environmental health by the larger Guelph community that it is a part of.”

*Nominated by Mary Catherine Stewart*



# Jennifer-Lynn Schneider

Jennifer-Lynn Schneider's ability to bounce back and overcome obstacles has quietly inspired many, both in the running community and at places such as Lakeside Hope House.

Lindsay Baxter at Hope House calls Schneider the "embodiment of resilience."

Schneider, a Guelph native, has struggled with an addiction to crystal meth and she's proud that other addicts look up to her and that her achievements have inspired some of them to get clean.

Schneider was homeless when she dis-

covered athletics three years ago. Now the 30-year-old has her own apartment.

"I started running with my (backpack) and walking with my pack," she said. "In June of 2013, I decided to do a triathlon just for giggles." She finished 39th in a field of 338.

"I am proud of who I've become and I'm not afraid to let people know what my addiction is because it's with me as who I am as an athlete," Schneider said.

This year has been an emotional one as she was hit by a car while cycling, causing her to suffer a concussion and lose her

unborn child. She bounced back and gained national media attention as she ran in the Boston Marathon for the first time, followed six days later by the Waterloo Marathon. Being the fastest woman at the previous year's Waterloo race was what gave her the qualifying time to run in Boston.

Being recognized as one of Guelph's 40 Under 40 is "a really big deal," Schneider says. "There are a little more eyes and ears on me than I thought."

*Nominated by Bob Moore*

# Kelly Steadman



A dancer, dance teacher, musician and studio co-ordinator, Guelph native Kelly Steadman has worked quietly and humbly at the things she loves.

Now the studio rentals co-ordinator at Guelph Youth Dance, Steadman, 36, is committed to promoting and helping arts and community groups work creatively together in the city and at the downtown studio.

Steadman discovered at age eight what she wanted to do after she saw a contemporary dance recital at the Guelph Public Library with a neighbour, who was an arts enthusiast and Guelph Little Theatre actor.

“It was really minimal, three dancers,” Steadman said. “My whole world was blown. I knew immediately that’s what I wanted to do.”

She followed her dream and studied fine arts in performance dance in Toronto and continued her training in Argentina and Taiwan. She is a founding member of Fall On Your Feet Movement Collective and has been dancing and performing with Dancetheatre David Earle for almost 10 years. She has taught ballet, jazz and modern dance at Royal City School of Ballet and Guelph Youth Dance.

Steadman lives in Guelph with her husband and young son.

“It’s a tremendous honour,” she said of being named to the 40 Under 40. “I would say it’s a blessing to work within the community of Guelph and even more so in the dance world in the artistic community ... bringing everybody together. Just being recognized for that feels really special.”

*Nominated by Freddie Potvin*

# Trevor DeVries

An associate professor in the University of Guelph's Department of Animal Biosciences, Trevor DeVries is the Canada Research Chair in dairy cattle behaviour and welfare.

A lot of the research DeVries and his group do is focused on improving the health and welfare of dairy cows, as a healthy cow means a productive cow for the dairy producers. In particular, DeVries studies how housing, feeding strategies and nutrition affect productivity, health and welfare.

"Partway through my undergraduate program, I was introduced to research and one of the opportunities that was afforded to me was to study dairy cattle," he said.

"My family has a history of dairy farming. My dad grew up on a dairy farm and I spent much time as a youth on my uncle's dairy farm so I always had a love of dairy cows. For me, it was a perfect fit."

DeVries, 36, is a highly sought-after lecturer and has shared his research at more than 100 industry events around the world. He was nominated by several of his graduate students, who described him as an excellent and supportive mentor who has helped his students find careers in academia and industry. DeVries won the 2013 Cargill Animal Nutrition Young Scientist Award and the 2014 Lallemand Animal Nutrition Award from the American Dairy Science Association.

DeVries lives in Guelph with his wife and three children.

"For me, it's kind of a testament to the work that my research group has done as a whole," he said of being included in the 40 Under 40 class of 2016. "I don't like to take any credit on my own. I've been able to establish a well-functioning and productive research program, which has largely been driven by the support and success of my students, my grad students."

*Nominated by Meagan King*



# Stefanie Sharp



The alumni advancement manager for the University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College, Stefanie Sharp builds relationships internally with OVC's stakeholders and externally with alumni and corporate partners. Her traits as a real go-getter and being super-organized have helped her achieve the fundraising goals of the college, OVC Pet Trust and the OVC Alumni Association. She has helped secure many gifts for the college worth tens of thousands of dollars.

Sharp, 27, is passionate about fitness and is a group fitness instructor at the University of Guelph with classes of up to 50 participants. She's also working on her master of business administration in sustainable commerce from the university's College of Business and Economics and has her bachelor of commerce in marketing management.

Sharp and her husband live in Guelph. "It's an honour," she said of being named to the 40 Under 40 class of 2016. "I do a lot of nominating as part of my role because we want to make sure people are getting the recognition they deserve. To be nominated and then to receive the actual recognition myself is a really neat experience because now I know what it feels like for the people I do it for. That's a very small part of what I do, but it's really neat to see it come full circle and it's nice to be recognized."

*Nominated by Jeff Wichtel*

# Adam Stewart



Adam Stewart is the marketing manager for Cushman and Wakefield Waterloo Region, but he's also active in his hometown of Guelph.

As the Chamber of Commerce's refugee forum corporate challenge co-ordinator, he helped secure significant commitments and participation from the business community in supporting the local initiative to welcome 75 Syrian refugee families to Guelph.

Joining this project seemed like a natural fit for Stewart after he was put in charge of planning a conference, through Mohawk

College, on building welcoming and supportive communities for newcomers.

Stewart is also an active member of the Guelph Triathlon Club and manages the club's social media accounts.

Stewart, 36, lives in Guelph with his wife and young son.

"It was kind of unexpected," Stewart said of being included in 2016's 40 Under 40. "What I see as the value in this is the unexpected appreciation that can be brought forward from a community leader like Kithio, but being able to sort of step up

and find an opportunity to contribute to the community in this initiative.

"I think there's value in recognition not only for me but I think the group itself and, collectively, the organization that's supporting it, the individuals and the various groups that are supporting it. I don't see it as a personal gratification; I think it's more of a collective thing that's a symbol of the community and how everyone is coming together."

*Nominated by Kithio Mwanzia*



# Melissa Kwiatkowski

As the director of strategy and risk management at Guelph General Hospital, Melissa Kwiatkowski supports the hospital's team in developing its strategic plan and achieving the goals set out in the plan. She partners with organizations across the city to improve the experience of patients and their families.

Kwiatkowski is also the manager of health system integration with the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network and volunteers with Circles Guelph Wellington, an organization committed to

reducing poverty in the area. She's also on the board of directors of the Alzheimer's Society of Waterloo Wellington.

"Since I have a great life and wonderful family support, I feel compelled to give back to the city because I have the time," the 36-year-old said. "I've been blessed with some great things in my life and there are a bunch of different causes that feel really near and dear to my heart and I feel strongly about working toward eliminating poverty in the community."

Kwiatkowski, her husband and two

children live in Guelph.

"It's a bit awkward for me to have individual recognition because I feel like I've just been lucky enough to have these different things cross my path," Kwiatkowski said of being included in the 40 Under 40 class of 2016.

"I work with such wonderful people at work, at all the different organizations that I get to volunteer with and I feel like everyone should be recognized."

*Nominated by Suzanne Bone*

# Graham Taylor



An assistant professor in the University of Guelph's School of Engineering, Graham Taylor leads the Machine Learning Research Group.

Taylor led a group that was working to get smartphones to recognize a person's body movement habits in an attempt to get rid of the need for personal identification numbers and passwords.

"Our project was to use all of the different sensors around the device to build a picture of who had it," he said. "If I'm carrying it in my pocket, my body movement is different than other people and that's what my team worked on, the body movement aspect of it."

That, combined with readings from all of the different sensors on the phone, can help it detect whether or not you're the one trying to use the phone.

Taylor, 37, has also researched the prospect of giving computers the ability to "see," to recognize and differentiate many visual cues. He hopes one day computers could analyze and understand surveillance camera footage, for instance, and then report that information to a person.

Taylor is a well-liked instructor for the support he provides his students.

"Despite his busy schedule, Graham always makes time to provide support to those in need," writes student Griffin Lacey.

He has also helped mentor international students involved in the Mitacs Globalink program, which pairs undergraduates with researchers abroad.

Taylor, his wife and two children live in Guelph.

"When I came back to Canada (after a stint in New York City), I decided to make Guelph my home and become part of the community. Being recognized as a leader in the community means a lot to me and it means I've put down roots here."

*Nominated by Joel Best*

# Kevin MacNeill

Kevin MacNeill is having an impact as a coach with the Guelph Gryphons football team.

He was named in January as the interim head coach of the defending Ontario University Athletics football champions. This comes after serving as the team's defensive co-ordinator for six years, during which time the Gryphons became known as a hard-hitting squad and reduced the number of points they surrendered by almost two touchdowns per game.

MacNeill, 38, has a bachelor of arts degree in communication from Wilfrid Laurier University and is pursuing a master's in leadership at the University of Guelph.

He, his wife and two young children live in Guelph.

"It's definitely an honour and it definitely makes me appreciate all the people who have helped me get to where I am,"

MacNeill said of being named to the 40 Under 40.

"It's very humbling to see the list of other candidates and to be mentioned in the same conversation as these great people and the great work that they're doing. At times, football coaches are only seen for what we do on game day, but the real work is in all the student athletes that we support and help do great things in their lives. It's a privilege to get to work with a great group of young guys and a great group of coaches who help inspire them to be great."

*Nominated by Nick Parisotto*





# Ami Dehne

The owner and founder of the Minga Skill Building Hub, Ami Dehne is motivated by facilitating and sharing skill-building opportunities within the community and is inspired by the opportunities for community building.

“It really started by just recognizing the importance that community has in our overall happiness and overall well-being, so strengthening that community I found to be a really important part of what makes me happy and what I believe can make our community happy,” she said.

“I get involved to try to bring our

community together.”

Minga offers hands-on skill-building workshops taught by locals, from fermenting foods to blacksmithing.

“Her business, Minga, is a brilliant approach to creating knowledge transfer, experiential learning and community cohesion,” writes Mary-Kate Gilbertson.

Dehne, 33, has worked with eMERGE Guelph, which helps residents reduce their impact on the environment, and sits on the board of Transition Guelph. She has helped organize the Resilience Festival and the Taste Real Guelph Wellington Local

Food Festival.

“She is passionate, warm, a great listener and somebody who very simply makes things happen for all of us!” writes her nominator, Claire Coulter.

Dehne, her husband and their young son live in Guelph.

Honoured to be recognized in 40 Under 40, she says it is nice “that the work that I’m doing in the community is being noticed and that it is of value and that I’m of value to my community.”

*Nominated by Claire Coulter*

# Jessica Hirst



As a founder, bridal consultant and wedding co-ordinator at Guelph's Something Green Bridal Boutique, Jessica Hirst helps local brides' wedding dreams come true.

"When I team up with a bride, hopefully we can make it as easy as possible as well as stress-free," Hirst said. "Last year was my second year of doing bridal co-ordination so in that sense you get to know the bride and the groom and the whole bridal party really well, as well as run the whole day."

Hirst had eight weddings on her schedule this year and finds that each one is different.

"It's nice because a lot of girls in the Guelph area like to get married outside," the 27-year-old said. "There are some unique venues and they really play around with local vendors and are really supporting Guelph in general, which is nice."

Hirst is artistic and creative and has developed a strong social media following for the downtown boutique she operates with her mother. Both her wedding planning business and the bridal boutique have an eco-friendly philosophy. The shop uses items made using sustainable materials and practices and a portion of every sale at the shop goes toward planting trees in Guelph. Hirst also encourages her clients to support local businesses.

"I'm flattered," Hirst said of being named to this year's 40 Under 40. "I've been living here for about 10 years and it's very exciting to be recognized in the Guelph community."

*Nominated by Donna Hirst*

# Graham Fach



This year has been a great one for Graham Fach.

In February, he became the first Canadian to ever win an event on the Professional Bowlers Association tour. And he didn't pick just any old tournament to win, he was victorious at a major event. Next time out on the tour, he won again.

"It's been way better than I could ever have dreamed of," the 24-year-old said of his first season on the pro tour. "I'm really happy that I'm able to do this for a living. It's always been a dream and the fact that it has now come true, it's a difficult adjustment period, believe it or not, but it's one that I'm definitely willing to take."

Fach figures he won't change his ways just because he's now a winner on the pro tour.

"The goals are still the same," he said. "You still have the same training regimens and the same thought process toward every competition."

Fach lives in Guelph when he's not at a tournament.

"It's nice to know that I'm recognized for what I love to do and being compared to everyone else in the 40 Under 40 is going to be cool to see."

*Nominated by Karen Herman*



# Andrea Perry

Andrea Perry, who served as an intelligence officer for the Canadian military in Afghanistan, has turned her love of reading into a love of writing.

“I’ve loved books since I was a little girl, so I was always a big reader but never really wrote,” the 29-year-old said.

“I was in the military for 10 years and occupied with sports and all these other things, but I was always reading, reading, reading. Then I just found that I started to want to write about my experiences, specifically in Afghanistan when I was overseas. I thought, I need to write about this because

I have a whole bunch of stuff inside I needed to get out.”

After completing her military service, she enrolled in the master of creative writing program at the University of Guelph. Her thesis, a three-part fictional novel, was based on her experiences in the military. She also played varsity soccer for the Gryphons. This year, she had her first book of poetry, “Rise,” published by Guelph’s Vocamus Press.

Perry was nominated for 40 Under 40 for her spirit and the inspirational example she sets for others. “I admire her continuing

faith in the better parts of human nature,” writes her nominator, Mahak Jain. “She speaks plainly and with sincerity of her belief in the power of love and connection.”

Being named part of Guelph Life’s 40 under 40 “really moved me a lot just to know that it’s not necessarily the specific things I’ve been doing, but who I am,” she said. “That seems to be reaching people and that’s important to me because, since I was young, I’ve said that I want who I am to be more important than what I do.”

*Nominated by Mahak Jain*

# Janét Aizenstros

A love of writing started Guelph native Janét Aizenstros down a path that has led to great success.

“I’ve just always loved writing and everything just came out of that,” she said.

The chief executive officer of Ahava Media Group International, Aizenstros has written several children’s books and a book of poetry. She has also run a podcast and YouTube channel, where she tackled issues affecting women and offered advice and inspiration.

“I actually started writing and podcasting. I had an online radio network called Women’s Movement Radio,” she said.

“All I did was I interviewed thought leaders and everyday women and eventually I got into interviewing celebrities and I really just talked to people about mindfulness, life balance, them sharing their story.”

Aizenstros, 36, spoke about her successes on a panel at the Ignite. Empower. Innovate. conference, put on by Innovation Guelph in March. She is also a member of the Guelph Arts Council board of directors and has appeared on CTV’s “Canada AM” and on HuffPost Live.

“I’m balanced. I live a very balanced life,” she said. Aizenstros, her life partner and two sons live in Guelph.

“I think it’s amazing,” she said of being named to this year’s 40 Under 40. “I’m so glad to be nominated and I’m so thankful for the women that did nominate me in Guelph. I said this year, this is coming up on my fifth year in business, that I just want to give back to my community and spend more time in my community.”

*Nominated by Indu Arora*



# Blair Cameron



Blair Cameron uses his talents as videographer to tell the story of business in Guelph and across the country.

“Video is such an amazing medium for communicating information, for telling a story, for making people laugh and cry and feel inspired,” he said.

Cameron, 31, started doing videos to add to his presentations when he studied nutritional science and did a master’s in nutrition at the University of Guelph.

“I was always interested in communicating that information,” he said.

“How do you take these complex ideas and kind of distil it down to something that’s understandable? So for my presentations, I’d always have a video component as well.”

Cameron is the president of Cameron Productions, which was founded in 2011, and an associate with Merkato Communications, where he consults on nutrition-focused media campaigns. Cameron and his team have made videos for the Chamber of Commerce to highlight some of the business leaders in Guelph.

He is also involved in starting Ward 1 Studios, a creative hub for producing video, animation, photography and graphic design.

“We’re so lucky here in Guelph to have such a rich and diverse and vibrant creative community, whether it’s music or photography or graphic design, fine arts, dance,” he said.

Cameron lives in Guelph with his wife and two children.

“It’s completely unexpected and obviously an honour,” he said of being named to the 40 Under 40. “It’s always an esteemed group. When it comes out, I always look forward to seeing who the young faces in Guelph are and what they’re doing.”

*Nominated by Kithio Mwanzia*

# Brandon Plattner



Being asked to coauthor a chapter in what is considered the “bible” of veterinary pathology demonstrates the high regard in which Brandon Plattner is held in his field.

Clear-minded, forthright, positive, thoughtful and critical are words used to describe Plattner, an assistant professor in the University of Guelph Ontario Veterinary College’s Department of Pathobiology.

Plattner, 39, has a heavy undergraduate and graduate teaching load and supervises a

large research program on the pathogenesis of Johne’s disease, a chronic disease that affects the intestinal tract of dairy cattle and can lead to severe weight loss and reduced dairy production. He has held positions with the American College of Veterinary Pathologists and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, among others.

“I’ve always had an interest in dairy,” said Plattner, who grew up on a hobby farm and was a veterinarian in Kansas before he, his

wife and three children moved to Guelph. “I don’t work exclusively on dairy cows, but in research I get to stay connected with the dairy industry and sort of what’s happening.”

“The future of OVC is bright when accomplished faculty like Plattner support its efforts and reputation!” writes John Lumsden, professor and chair of the Department of Pathobiology.

*Nominated by John Lumsden*



# Matthew Hayday

An associate professor and graduate program co-ordinator in the University of Guelph's Department of History, Matthew Hayday studies political history and says he's been a politics junkie since before he was a teenager.

"My dad introduced me to 'Royal Canadian Air Farce' on radio when I was a kid and Maclean's magazine and I've followed politics ever since," he said.

Events at the time helped Hayday develop a real passion for what was going on in Canada.

"It was the years of the Meech Lake Accord and Constitution reform and the Quebec referendum and that really was the hook that drew me in to wanting to do

more on issues around Canadian history, around language, around the place of Quebec in Confederation, but also about how Canada's sense of itself was changing over time," he said. "That's what a lot of my research has been about."

Hayday's research has focused on Canadian language policy, federalism and national identities. The 39-year-old has written two books, "Bilingual Today, United Tomorrow: Official Languages in Education and Canadian Federalism" and "So They Want Us to Learn French: Promoting and Opposing Bilingualism in English-Speaking Canada." And he has edited several other books.

He was the founding chair of the Canadian

Historical Association's Political History Group and has served as associate editor of the Journal of Canadian Studies.

Hayday and his husband live in Guelph. "It's a very nice honour and a recognition to be noted for still being young just before getting over the hump to 40 in a sense," Hayday said of being named to the 40 Under 40.

"I would say that I have worked quite hard to get things done at a fairly early stage in my life and it's nice to be included on that list and also it's nice to have it be in the local context of Guelph explicitly."

*Nominated by Catherine Carstairs*

# Michael Rogers



An associate professor in the University of Guelph's Department of Food Science, Michael Rogers aims to make food healthier. His research is based on understanding how small molecules self-assemble and the underlying forces that govern that assembly, which he hopes will lead to being able to make the unhealthy food structures that we currently eat healthier. One hope is to replace margarine and butter in processed foods with solidified unsaturated fats.

"Simplistically, we're trying to make processed food healthier," the 38-year-old said. "We're trying to make processed food as healthy as we can."

Rogers fulfilled his career projection and ambition in 2015 when he returned to the University of Guelph, where he had earned a bachelor and master of science, as well as his PhD. He worked for several years at the University of Saskatchewan and Rutgers University.

He has been awarded the Young Scientist Award by the International Union of Food Science and Technology and the American Oil Chemists Society Young Scientist Research Award. He is also the associate editor of the journal *Food Biophysics*, was an invited expert at an EU-Canada roundtable on the use of nanotechnologies in the food chain, and a scientific reviewer for many U.S. funding agencies.

Rogers, his wife and two young sons live on the outskirts of Guelph.

"It's always nice to be recognized for accomplishments that you've done in your career," Rogers said of the nomination. "I think the difference, though, for me ... is that whenever a faculty is kind of recognized, it's a lot more recognition than just the faculty member. It's the organizations that you work within and also the graduate students that you supervise that make the accomplishment possible. So for me, it's a recognition of a lot of people's hard work, not just my own."

*Nominated by Art Hill and Wayne Caldwell*



# Michael Treadgold

**M**ichael Treadgold's inspiring and contagious passion and commitment come from the men who were involved in his life at an early age.

"It's a personal understanding about male role models and how they affected my life," said the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Guelph's manager of development and communications.

"I was very lucky to have an amazing dad, an amazing grandfather and amazing role models in my life growing up. I look at them, especially my father and my grandfather, as the two men who really shaped who

I am today."

As an ambassador and head of fundraising for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Guelph, Treadgold rallies volunteers and educates and engages supporters. He was nominated for the organization's Speaker of the Year award in 2013 and 2014.

Prior to his work with Big Brother Big Sisters, Treadgold, 31, worked for the Fergie Jenkins Foundation, which supports hundreds of charities in Canada and the United States.

Newlyweds, Treadgold and his wife live in Burlington.

"I think if I were to come up with just one word — honoured," Treadgold said of being named a 40 Under 40.

"I've had a number of friends, colleagues and folks in my network who have received this honour over the last couple of years and it was a bit of a personal goal for me as well, but ultimately to be nominated for it, it came as a surprise. To be named with so many other people who are doing so much good in the community, it truly is an honour."

*Nominated by Marissa Teeter*