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Salmon Arm's Smoke Free Champion – A Pioneer in Tobacco Reduction

“Run him out of town”, “that man needs psychiatric help”, were just a few comments made about Dan MacQuarrie, former councillor for the Municipal District of Salmon Arm, when he first suggested, in 1975, that smoking should not be allowed in public places.

“Dan truly is deserving of a Smoke Free Champion for Change award,” said Trish Hill, Senior Tobacco Reduction Coordinator with Interior Health. “In 1975 smoke free spaces were virtually unheard of. People were smoking everywhere – in restaurants, bars, at work and even in airplanes. Dan was clearly a pioneer in tobacco reduction and he remains dedicated to the cause today.”

Dan was not discouraged by his critics and continued his work to make the community safer and healthier by advocating for smoke free spaces. Dan contacted other smoke free advocates across Canada and the U.S., joined advocacy groups and continued to lobby wherever and whenever he could. In 1989, the community's first bylaw on smoking restrictions was passed but he did not stop there.

In the years that followed he continued to advocate for more smoke free spaces in his community and was instrumental in forming Salmon Arm's Coalition for Health – a multi disciplinary committee of community members and health professionals dedicated to reducing harm from second hand smoke. For Dan, the campaign is not over yet. He is now a key promoter of a Smoke Free Parks and Beaches bylaw for Salmon Arm.

“What's important to me is the impact on children,” said Dan. “We need to stop exposing children to second hand smoke, wherever they are, including parks and beaches.”

The Smoke Free Champions awards are an initiative of Interior Health's Tobacco Reduction Program. The awards recognize people who have gone above and beyond to reduce tobacco use by preventing people from starting to use tobacco, helping people to stop using tobacco and reducing exposure to second-hand smoke.

“These awards are not only about recognizing the great work that is being done to promote tobacco reduction,” said Trish Hill. “They are also about sharing ideas and inspiring others to take action. Dan is certainly an inspiration.”

For more information on Interior Health's Tobacco Reduction Program and Smoke Free Champions visit <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/HealthyLiving/TobaccoReduction/Pages/default.aspx>

Photo attached:

Left to Right - Edna MacQuarrie, spouse; Dan MacQuarrie, Smoke Free Champion; Shirley Ehlers, nominator

