

SHAWN BIRD

COMMUNITY CHAMPION | LEADER
VOLUNTEER | UMPIRE

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS is a citizen recognition campaign. Citizens of Maple Ridge were encouraged to nominate their exceptional neighbours according to five categories: artists, athletes, volunteers, storytellers and barrier breakers. Shawn is the fourth of the nominees to be featured.

Thank you, Shawn, for sharing your story with Maple Ridge. Learn more at mapleridge.ca/2016.

away. You don't have to leave Maple Ridge to experience the best that BC has to offer.

TELL US WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE UMPIRE IN CHIEF. This is now my third year of being the UIC for RMMBA. The first year was a pretty large learning curve but having Dan Herbranson and Tammy Doyle as co-helpers has made the job easier. The first year was a lot of "learning as we go". Thanks to Tammy, we have implemented a whole new assigning system that has helped allocate over 700 games in 2018.

We also have a mentorship program that we have started in RMMBA that helps develop our younger umpires. I am currently a level 4 umpire in the National Program. One of the major components in being in in the National Program is to give back. We have over 50 National certified level 4 umpires in the Province of BC and we are all required to give back as much as we can to our home associations. That is how I started as UIC for RMMBA.

The program relies heavily on building the confidence of the younger umpires by reinforcing proper mechanics while slowly introducing other parts to their game. No one was born being a good umpire. Like playing, it takes hours of practice to get better. With the help of the RMMBA executive, who have been very supportive in everything that we do, we have been able to implement this program. It is our hope that we can continue to grow.

I have heard many stories about abuse directed towards officials at the hands of players, coaches and spectators. Fortunately, we have implemented many positive rules in Minor baseball to help alleviate some of those issues and we have seen the instances of these kinds of problems on the decline. This will help us keep our younger umpires in the game so they are able to become confident umpires.

HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU THINK YOU'VE SPENT VOLUNTEERING OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS?

This is a tough one. My volunteer roots go back to my father, Walter Bird. He was instrumental in helping start Port Coquitlam Minor Baseball back in the 70's. He and my mom spent tireless hours volunteering in everything that their five children did. They were not sideline parents. They were honoured back in 2006 when the City of PoCo decided to

name the new baseball field at Gates Park after them. The rest of my family just figured it was something you were supposed to do.

I have been volunteering since I stopped playing minor ball in 1990. I have been tournament director and coached. I was in the PoCo Mens over 30 executive for 4 years, on the executive for Port Coquitlam/Ridge Meadows Ringette association and then the Lower Mainland AA ringette Association for 12 years in some capacity and now I am mentoring umpires. I would not even be able to begin to add up but if it was less than 10,000 hours I would be shocked.

TELL US ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF SPORT.

I believe that participating in sports promotes teamwork, accountability, leadership and sportsmanship while building character. It creates memories and friendship that will last a lifetime. Whether you play baseball, hockey, softball, soccer, rugby or ringette, the people you meet and the coaches that teach you, are all memories that will be there long after your playing days are behind you.

WHAT PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE TO UP AND COMING ATHLETES.

One piece of advice for athletes in Maple Ridge and especially those that will be participating in the **2020 BC SUMMER GAMES** is to enjoy every minute. I participated in the BC Summer Games back in Surrey in the late 80's and my daughter participated in the BC Winter Games a few years back. We both went on to attend and win other tournaments in our playing careers but the experience of participating in the BC Games ranks right up there with some of our fondest memories.

"I BELIEVE THAT PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS PROMOTES TEAMWORK, ACCOUNTABILITY, LEADERSHIP AND SPORTSMANSHIP WHILE BUILDING CHARACTER. IT CREATES MEMORIES AND FRIENDSHIP THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME."

Also, take a moment to thank those that volunteer their time to sports.

Thank your coaches that eat dinner early or late so they can get to the field or the arena before everyone else. Thank the team managers that spend hours outside of game days preparing schedules or arranging snacks. And also do not forget to thank your parents. They drove you to and from your games and practices while making sure your uniform or jersey was clean and that you were fed so all you had to worry about was playing.

You may not realize how much work goes in to your playing career, but you will one day.

GET INVOLVED

RMMBA | INTERESTED IN COACHING, UMPIRING
OR WANT MORE INFO?

RM-BASEBALLBC.CA



HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN MAPLE RIDGE?

I have lived in Maple Ridge for 26 years.

WHAT DOES "COMMUNITY" MEAN TO YOU?

I moved to Maple Ridge 26 years ago because it was an affordable place to live and start a family. I quickly realized that Maple Ridge was filled with people from all over the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland that moved here for the same reason. Community is about everyone being a part of having the same particular interests. Living in Maple Ridge helps build that community feeling. I feel that sports have been instrumental in creating that community spirit in Maple Ridge.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT LIVING IN MAPLE RIDGE?

There is something for everyone and it is never far away! I love hiking in the trails, going to Golden Ears Park or hanging out at one of the many lakes that are all minutes



MORE INFO:
PG 10 or visit
bcgames.org

