

Lakeland SSFA president grateful and humbled to be named Prince Albert Citizen of the Year
SSFA combines two main passions for 2023 Citizen of the Year winner



“I guess I’ve got a lot of people fooled.”

Those were the words from Lakeland Saskatchewan Senior Fitness Association (SSFA) president Barry Brezden after being named Prince Albert’s 2023 Citizen of the Year.

Brezden received news of the nomination shortly before the Lakeland SSFA board was scheduled to meet. He said being named Citizen of the Year was a “super huge honour” but also an unexpected one.

“You have to put one person’s name on a paper, but it really isn’t one person who makes it all happen,” he said. “Congratulations to my team and all my partners.... That’s who makes it go.”

Brezden was nominated for Citizen of the Year by fellow Lakeland SSFA board member Sandra Greenwood. She described him as a hard worker who set the bar high for SSFA members.

“It’s hard to keep up with him, but it’s exciting and it’s all for a very, very, very good cause,” Greenwood said.

“He goes night and day. Saturdays aren’t exempt. Nothing is exempt. He’s done so much work. He deserves it.”

Brezden became Lakeland SSFA president earlier this year. Since then, the organization has expanded its outreach and social media presence, sponsoring comedy events with Off the Cuff Improv, organizing free acting workshops with Off the Cuff member Adreanna Boucher,

partnering with the Prince Albert Royal Canadian Legion for an indoor games night, and creating a Group Fitness Class with J-4CE Personal Training.

Brezden said he's always had a passion for fitness and helping seniors, and being president of the Lakeland SSFA allows him to combine those interests.

"In hindsight, I was actually going to start a seniors fitness club in PA a long time ago, but I said to myself, 'well ... it's going to take a little bit of effort. You don't have a vehicle. You don't have an avenue,'" he remembered. "(Then) the SSFA came along."

"Part of my goals—one of my dreams—is to help people, and here I am," he added.

Brezden joined the SSFA after competing at the organization's 55+ Provincial Games, which were held in Prince Albert in 2022. Brezden enjoyed the experience, but was critical of some organizational aspects.

When he was invited to fill out a survey about the games, he provided three pages of feedback. One year later, he saw an SSFA newspaper ad for a new Lakeland president, called the provincial president, and took on the new role.

The organization has expanded its footprint beyond sports and fitness to include cultural, educational, and artistic events. Brezden credits the SSFA board and volunteers for their success over the past year.

"Individual awards are nice, but you have to surround (yourself) with other people who are equally as good as you or better," he said.

Brezden was raised in the Village of Canwood northwest of Prince Albert. As an adult, he got into sales and marketing, a job which took him across North America. He moved to Victoria, B.C. after retiring, but returned to the Prince Albert area in 2016 to look after a family member.

Brezden originally planned on only staying for the summer, but he ended up staying for good.

"I'm one of those guys who likes all four seasons, and in PA you get all four seasons," he said. "I've met a lot of great people when I got here. I continue to meet a lot of great people in this beautiful place called Prince Albert. I said to myself, 'why would I move back to Victoria when I've got everything here.'"

Brezden will be honoured at the annual Prince Albert Citizen of the Year banquet. A date, time, and location have yet to be announced.

The Prince Albert Citizen of the Year is chosen by a six person selection committee made up of representatives from the Prince Albert Kinsmen Club and Prince Albert Daily Herald.

@kerr_jas • jason.kerr@paherald.sk.ca

CAPTION1:

Jason Kerr/Daily Herald

Prince Albert's 2023 Citizen of the Year, Barry Brezden (right), receives the news from Kinsmen Club of Prince Albert member Wes Moore (left).

CAPTION2:

Jason Kerr/Daily Herald

Prince Albert's 2023 Citizen of the Year, Barry Brezden (centre, back row) poses for a photo with Prince Albert Daily Herald sales coordinator Erin Bergen (back left), publisher Donna Pfeil (back, centre-left), Prince Albert Kinsmen Club members Wes Moore (back, centre-right) and Joel Longworth (back right), and SSFA Lakeland board members Glenda Goertzen (front left) and Sandra Greenwood (front right).

