

The following letter was also submitted in support of Patrick McConnell's nomination:

Dear Nomination Committee,

I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Patrick McConnell for the EBA Volunteer of the Year Award. I think we would be hard pressed to find someone who is more dedicated to baseball in Etobicoke!

Living close to Millwood Park, I often drove past the ball diamonds over the summer and smiled as I saw Patrick there cutting the grass or doing some form of field maintenance. Even my kids would say, "I bet Mr. McConnell is out on the diamonds right now", and sure enough, they would be right.

One day this past summer, my son's Minor Peewee team had a game scheduled at Millwood which Patrick was going to umpire for us. The coaches made a decision to cancel the game due to the rain that we had had that morning, as they assumed the field would be a mess. However, when I called Patrick to let him know the game was being cancelled, he insisted that the game could go on...all the field needed was a little help. No surprise, Patrick spent the next several hours with myself and my 3 kids scooping water, shovelling dirt, and cutting grass, just so that these two teams could still play that day. The day turned out to be a beautifully sunny one and the game did indeed go on....thanks to Patrick.

In addition to the countless hours that Patrick clearly spends working on the Millwood fields, maintaining the new on-line field booking calendar, recruiting volunteers, training people to use the tractor, working on the EBA executive, convening tournaments, etc., Patrick is also a fabulous umpire! We were fortunate enough to have him umpire several of our games this summer (along with his son Zac). His enthusiasm for baseball and his support of these young players couldn't be more evident. What a fabulous role model he is for all of these young boys!

As my family cheered for my younger son's Bloordale Rookie Select team this summer, right through to their OBA win, Patrick was right there putting updates on the websites and sending emails to all the teams to let them know of the Rookie team's accomplishments. His praise of the team (and the other teams of course!) was so sincere and meant so much to the kids. I was so surprised that Patrick would drive all the way to Thorold to cheer for the Rookies in their final game in the OBA playoffs...but I shouldn't have been surprised...this is so typical of Patrick.

Although I am certain that Patrick expects no recognition for his exceptional commitment to baseball in Etobicoke, he truly is very deserving of recognition. In our eyes, he is definitely the Volunteer of the Year!

Sheila Sprenger (and sons, Ben and Jake who are also so grateful to Patrick!).