

Mike Starchuk

Loves Surrey

For him, living means helping others in Surrey

When Mike Starchuk met his future father-in-law — a neighbour at the time — he had no idea of the impact he would have on his life.

As a teen, Starchuk was intrigued with the man's career as a firefighter and decided he wanted to learn more.

Starchuk described his future father-in-law as an inspiration.

He was upbeat and always had a positive outlook on life, despite the horrible things he came across.

"If I lived across the street from a welder, I probably wouldn't be a firefighter," Starchuk chuckled.

So, at 21, he began his career with the Surrey Fire Fighters Association as a volunteer.

He was hooked from day one.

"I think from the very first time I found myself inside a house where you couldn't see your hand in front of your face, and you're told to go see if someone is in the bedroom or bathroom or anywhere else, well, the adrenaline rush was irreplaceable."

And his journey began.

Over his many years at the department, he has been a trainer, a mentor and an inspiration to those around him.

Starchuk is heavily involved in organizing charity events, both for the fire department and for various community organizations, including the Variety Club and the Child Development Centre.

"I work in Surrey, why would I not live here," he said.

And for Starchuk, living means helping others.

He said one of his many blessings is having a family that supports his many projects.

"I wouldn't have been able to do lots of these things without having a family that understands that I had to be away," he said.

"The amount of time I've spent with my family may be lesser than others, but they got to see the end results and what makes me happy about doing it."

Simply put, Starchuk does what he does to help others.

"I do it because you can see the results on people's faces that need it the most," he said.

"It seems like no matter how small of a thing you do for people, the reward they get is far greater than what you could ever imagine."

"When you have time to do a little bit, do it, because a little bit a lot of times makes a big difference."

From the beginning of his career, he has done just that and has helped the lives of countless people and organizations in Surrey.

And now, more than 25 years into his career, he has followed in the footsteps of his father-in-law.

On July 2, he received the same award that his father-in-law received 14 years ago: the Red Powell Award.

It is awarded to someone who has been with the fire department for 20 years or more and serves the community, in addition to the department.

On the award, right above Starchuk's name, is his inspiration — Ken Field, his father-in-law.

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