

Local women recognized by ASET

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Section News

Page A8

A Sherwood Park resident has received a major honour in her professional life.

Senia McPherson was named as the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) Volunteer of the Year.

McPherson was presented with the 2023 ASET Volunteer of the Year Award during an awards event at the association's annual general meeting in Calgary on April 21.

McPherson, a certified engineering technologist (CET), who works in chemical technology for the oil and gas industry, said the motivation to become a volunteer can be traced back to childhood when she and her two siblings were raised by a single mother living in low-income rental housing.

She said they were the recipients of a food hamper with gifts from 630 CHED Santas Anonymous during the holidays.

"The feeling of having complete strangers helping people they didn't even know has been etched in my memory," explained McPherson.

McPherson's work as an ASET volunteer includes delivering presentations to students at the province's four polytechnic and technical colleges (NAIT, SAIT, Lethbridge College and Red Deer Polytechnic).

Her work introduces the students to ASET and educates them about why it is important to become a member and exemplify the professional ethics and behaviour required of membership.

"It is meaningful that the inspiration for Senia McPherson's commitment to volunteerism for ASET and other organizations was her own experience of having received volunteer services during her childhood," explained ASET CEO Barry Cavanaugh. "She has shown that so often the best way to give back is to pay it forward. ASET is fortunate to have an outstanding volunteer like Senia helping advance its mission to serve and support engineering technology professionals across the province."

Her volunteer work and presentations have been so well received that they are now used as a reference tool for incoming ASET volunteers, according to ASET.

McPherson has also been a part of the development of ASET's volunteer management system and represented the group at NAIT's program advisory committee and a 1,000 women event at NorQuest College.

The Sherwood Park resident also gives back to the community by volunteering at the JCI Edmonton Holiday Hamper Program for more than a decade and has served as a moderator for the Canadian School of Hydrocarbon Measurement. If all that volunteering wasn't enough, McPherson has also been involved with the Sherwood Park Minor Hockey Association.

McPherson may work in a traditionally male-dominated industry but believes it is important for women in these industries to volunteer, which allows more opportunities to showcase your knowledge and skills.

"I think the biggest strength women bring to the profession is our natural ability to empathize. Working in oil and gas empowered me to highlight this trait. When volunteering, I share about the obstacles and challenges I've faced and lessons I've learned," said McPherson. "It thrills me to see the increasing number of women in various technology industries."

You can find out more about ASET at aset.ab.ca. tdosser@postmedia.com