

# Larry Hnetka Community Builder Award 2020

Ksenia Stepkina



Ksenia Stepkina embodies the word “community builder” in the numerous activities & events she takes on! Here are just a few examples of what Ksenia has been involved with this past year.

**Kitsilano Cares Community Volunteer Group –**

When COVID-19 shut down everything so suddenly last March Ksenia saw a need in the community and quickly took action! Within days she reached out to the community and built a team of 80 community volunteers, pairing them to support seniors and others not able to venture outdoors to do routine errands for themselves due to COVID-19.

Months later, she and her team continue to support seniors and others living on the Westside helping with grocery shopping, pharmacy pick up, and friendly visits to lonely seniors. This endeavour ended up in a partnership with Kits House where her volunteer team continues to support and assist the community.

The speed with which Ksenia was able to get this up and running was truly remarkable – she was able to move quickly when organizations could not. She made a huge difference in the lives of seniors living in isolation and fear through her quick action and ability to organize supports for them.

**Kitsilano Cares: COVID-19 Community Support Facebook Page –**

With the creation of this Facebook page, Ksenia established a way for the Kitsilano community to come together, engage, and support each other. This very active Facebook page now has over 780 members.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KitsilanoCares>

Ksenia also has an Instagram page @kindly.ksenia as well as a Facebook page Ksenia Stepkina - Community Builder, dedicated to her community-building journey, where she shares resources and inspiration for people to get involved in their community!

#### **NSG Project Leader-**

Ksenia applied for and was granted a Neighbourhood Small Grant for her project “Get to Know your Neighbours: The Ultimate Community Building Challenge”. Her R NSG project enabled a way for people, living within the same multi-storey building, or within the same block to get to know their closest neighbours, and deepen the sense of community within their immediate neighbourhood during COVID. She achieved this through the distribution of a “Community Building Box” -containing a number of activities/challenges for people to get to know and support one another.

#### **Russian Tea Ceremony Multiculturalism Project –**

Ksenia is an active Kits House volunteer! When the call went out for volunteers to share their traditions and customs Ksenia stepped up! She hosted two multicultural tea ceremonies, one at KNH, and one at Steeves Manor. Ksenia came wearing a full Russian traditional costume, provided a full Russian tea ceremony including traditional foods, and even brought in a large antique wood-burning teapot to show participants.

**Congratulations to Ksenia on becoming the recipient of the 2020 Ksenia Stepkina Community Builder Award!**