



BULLETIN

HSA pharmacists receive prestigious award

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Most recipients of the coveted Bowl of Hygeia ... the highest honour in pharmacy ... are fairly certain which of their achievements is being recognized by the award. Some may be state senators. Others might be city mayors. Still others might receive the award for devoting their time and talent to various pharmaceutical associations and colleges, or to hospital boards.

Mark and Rae Johnson, however, are an unusual case. Until the Annual General Meeting of the BC College of Pharmacists in mid-October, they can't be sure what exactly they're receiving the award for. This is because both HSA pharmacists have so many significant involvements worthy of recognition that it's hard to say which is most laudable.

So what's their best guess?

They are both so modest that it's hard to get them to hazard a guess.

"I suppose we could summarize our activities as being those for the service to children," admits Mark Johnson, who works in the pharmacy department at Delta Hospital. He seems genuinely embarrassed, and is not eager to elaborate. You can almost hear him blush.

"Well, whether as a boy scout leader, or serving on a preschool executive, or in Rae's case, being on the boards of special needs children's organizations, it all has to do with advocating for the needs of children," he eventually adds.

For all his modesty, Mark does seem proud of one thing: "I graduate from preschool this year, you know," he says. "The last of our eight children is about to finish attending the parent participation preschool we were involved with. We've had duties for twelve years." Mark explains that parents at this preschool are much more involved in the day-to-day operation of the school; parent education is a big aspect, as are preschool set-up and securing equipment and supplies. Only later does he mention that he also serves as president of the preschool, and has served on the executive for four years.

Rae, who represents Region 6 on HSA's Board of Directors, explains that she enjoys her life as a community activist. "For example, when I was on the Board of the Delta Association for Child Development, it was very rewarding work. I left that this spring, but I've remained involved in some of the committees," she says. "And

were both active in various schools, and our church, and theres union involvement as well. More than anything, it keeps you energized." Among Raes other involvements are those as a member of the Concerned Parents for Special Needs Children Committee, as guest lecturer for fibromyalgia education, and as a board member of two swimming associations,.

"Its really neat to think that somebody thought well enough of you to nominate you, and its also neat to think youre being supported in the choices that youve made," Rae says. "From time to time you often feel people think youre nuts; so its nice when theres this kind of recognition."

Rae seems happiest that she and Mark were recipients together. "We really see ourselves as a team. What ones able to do is only because the other is supportive of that," she says. "I like to think we got the award because were a family that focuses not only on our family and our needs, but also what we can do in the community that supports all of us," she adds. "There was a lot more to be involved in once we adopted four special needs children in addition to the older four we already had, but these are the same kinds of things that anybody would get involved in to support their kids."

The Bowl of Hygeia is awarded each year to pharmacists chosen by their peers for outstanding community service. Established in 1958, the award is presented annually by participating pharmaceutical associations in each province and state. The recipients are nominated by peers, and selected through provincial or state pharmaceutical colleges or associations.

The Bowl of Hygeia, the most widely recognized international symbol of pharmacy, traces its origins to Greek myth. Hygeia was the daughter and assistant of Aesculapius, the god of medicine and healing. Her classical symbol was a bowl containing a medicinal potion.

The award to Mark and Rae Johnson this year marks the first time the Bowl has been presented to a couple. They were both invited to Philadelphia for the awards ceremony in September.

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