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Town of Acton

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town of Acton Announces Recipients of the 2021 Joseph A. Lalli Merit Award





Health Director Sheryl Ball and Director of Nursing Services Heather York received the Joseph A. Lalli Merit Award for 2021. (Photo Courtesy Town of Acton)

ACTON – Town Manager John Mangiaratti and Police Chief Richard Burrows are pleased to announce that the Town of Acton has honored three recipients with the Joseph A. Lalli Merit Award for 2021 in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the community.

Director of Nursing Services Heather York and Health Director Sheryl Ball were selected as Municipal Employees of the Year. York and Ball were honored for keeping the Acton community prepared and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensured that residents had up-to-the-minute information about the virus.

Officer Tricia Sullivan received the Public Safety Employee of the Year Award, honored for her care, compassion, and dedication to all Acton residents.

Lalli, an Acton resident, businessman, and philanthropist, was a strong supporter of public service. He wished to leave a legacy by acknowledging a public safety employee and municipal employee each year for outstanding performance and extraordinary contributions. The Award is supported and funded by the Steinberg-Lalli Charitable Foundation.

Municipal Employees of the Year

Director York and Director Ball received the award at a reception on Thursday, June 17, in the Francis Faulkner Room at Town Hall. Several dozen Town employees attended the event, the first time employees could gather in large numbers following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

This is the first year that more than one municipal employee has been honored.

Director York has been a registered nurse since 2000. She worked at several hospitals before joining the Town of Acton as a per diem nurse in 2004. She was promoted to Clinical Manager in 2005, and to Director of Nursing Services in 2010.

Director Ball started her career with the Town of Acton in 1988 as the Secretary for the Health Department, then became Secretary to the Town Manager/Board of Selectmen in 1994. After achieving many health certifications she became a Town Health Inspector in 2008, responsible for enforcing compliance with Board of Health rules and regulations. She was promoted to Health Director in 2015.

In accepting their awards, Director Ball and Director York thanked their families, public health nurses, Town Hall and School Department co-workers, and Town boards and committees for helping the community navigate the pandemic, and whom they said deserved the credit.

"It was quite a challenging year for everyone and my heart goes out to those impacted by this virus," Director York said. "I am fortunate to work with dedicated health staff members who spent countless hours navigating all the guidelines to ensure that the public and businesses were kept up to date with the constant ever-changing restrictions. Thank you to the Town Manager and Town administration and boards for their support."

"I appreciate this recognition, but I believe there are a lot of people who deserve this as well," Director Ball said.

Each recipient also thanked the other for their teamwork and friendship.

"She is a trusted colleague and friend, whom I could turn to," Director York said. "She provided emotional support when the wave of discouragement became overwhelming."

"Heather and I worked tirelessly and we made a great team and I couldn't have done it without her by my side," Director Ball said. "I could not have done it without her as well as her staff."

"Days, nights, weekend, for more than a year, Heather and Sheryl led the Acton

community in the fight against COVID-19. It was never easy, always challenging, but Heather and Sheryl always kept a positive outlook with a much-needed “can-do” attitude,” Town Manager Mangiaratti said.

Public Safety Employee of the Year

Officer Trish Sullivan received the Public Safety Award at a reception on Tuesday, Aug. 10, at the Acton Police Station surrounded by co-workers, family, and friends.

Officer Sullivan grew up in Acton, and is a 1989 Acton-Boxborough Regional High School graduate. Her grandfather, Boston Police Detective James B. O’Leary, was shot and killed in the line of duty in 1963; his name is memorialized at the Schroeder Police Headquarters in Boston and on a bridge plaque across from the Prudential Tower in Boston’s Back Bay.

She has served in numerous important roles within the Department: School Resource Officer, Elder Affairs Officer, member of the Domestic Violence Unit, and Sexual Assault Investigator. Officer Sullivan also serves as the Department’s liaison to the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

In 2017, Officer Sullivan received a Special Recognition Award from the Massachusetts Association of Women in Law Enforcement, for finding the origin of an untraceable 911 call that led to an elderly resident and his dog receiving needed assistance.

In his nomination, Police Chief Richard Burrows highlighted the story of a call during which Officer Sullivan recognized that the homeowner’s kitchen was empty, and requested permission to go to the Acton Food Pantry to collect food items. Chief Burrows later learned that Officer Sullivan had purchased pet food and necessities for the homeowner’s dog, paying out of her own pocket.

“I know of several other incidents where she has spent her own money on people in Town to assist them in any way possible,” Chief Burrows wrote. “I know Trish wants no recognition for her actions and continues to perform these extraordinary acts of kindness during her patrol shifts.”

In her remarks, Officer Sullivan thanked Chief Burrows, Deputy Chief Jim Cogan, Lt. Edward Lawton, Lt. Doug Sturniolo, Town Manager Mangiaratti, and the Select Board for the award.

“I would also like to thank my fellow officers, as these are the men and woman who contribute to my achievements,” Officer Sullivan said. “I am fortunate and proud to work with each of them and to work for the citizens of Acton. I am truly humbled.”

“In or out of uniform, Officer Sullivan’s compassion shines through,” Chief Burrows said.

"She is an outstanding example of modern policing as community service."

"Director Ball, Director York, and Officer Sullivan perform their duties at a high level, and they are worthy recipients of this honor," Town Manager Mangiaratti said. "I ask Town employees and residents to join me in congratulating them on their outstanding achievements."

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Officer Tricia Sullivan received the 2021 Joseph A. Lalli Merit Award as Public Safety Employee of the Year. From left, Town Manager John Mangiaratti, Deputy Police Chief Jim Cogan, Mason Sullivan, Officer Sullivan, brother A.J. Dellicicchi, sister Katie Rocklin, cousin Terri Boudreau, aunt Marybeth O'Leary and Uncle James O'Leary, along with K9 Zane. (Photo Courtesy Town of Acton)

A message from the Town of Acton and the Acton Police Department

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