

Group honours local leaders

B.C. Community Achievement Awards issued annually

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A tech industry promoter and a mental-health executive are the two Kelowna winners of B.C. Community Achievement Awards.

Raghwa Gopal is the CEO of Accelerate Okanagan, the group that helps local technology companies of all sizes with programs, support and office space.

He also has his fingers in many other pies, from the Okanagan College Foundation, Rotary Club and the United Way to Project Literacy, Okanagan Angel Network and Just Be Friends Kids.

Gopal also headed one of Kelowna's original high-tech companies, from 1979 to 2006 leading Vadim Software, which makes solutions for municipal governments.

Shelagh Turner has been executive director of the Kelowna branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association since 2005.

"We've really focused on building a strong organization that engages staff and helps them do great work so we can provide services to some of the most vulnerable in our community," said Turner.

The association also works with an innovation and colla-

boration credo.

"For instance, our Connected by 25 program helps at-risk youth transition from youth programs to adult programs," said Turner.

B.C. Community Achievement Awards are given out every year to 30 people who have made a significant contribution through volunteering, their work or both.

The accolades are handed out by the B.C. Achievement Foundation, an independent body that was endowed by the province in 2003 to celebrate excellence in B.C.

Premier Christy Clark, who is also Westside-Kelowna MLA, is on the foundation's board.

"All British Columbians are inspired by those who lead by example, lending their time and talents in their community," she said.

"Thank you to the 2016 recipients, your commitment and generosity make a real difference in people's lives."

The B.C. Achievement Foundation also runs the annual B.C. Aboriginal Business Awards, Time to Read Award (for early literacy), B.C. Creative

Award for First Nations' Art, B.C. National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction and B.C. Creative Achievement Award for Applied Art and Design.

For a full list of community achievement winners from other parts of the province see bcachievement.com.



Gopal



Turner