



2025 K-W Oktoberfest Rogers Women of the Year Awards Nominees Announced

- **Record-Setting Number of Nominations for 50th Anniversary**
- **Keynote Speaker – Sarah Prevette**

April 15, 2025 – KITCHENER, ON – Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is pleased to announce that with 140 nominations in 12 categories, another record has been broken for the 2025 Rogers Women of the Year awards. The annual ceremony will take place on the evening of Thursday, May 22nd.

Since 1975, K-W Oktoberfest has proudly provided a platform to honour extraordinary women in Waterloo Region. "It is incredibly fitting that our 50th anniversary boasts yet another record-setting number of nominees," shares Tracy Van Kalsbeek, K-W Oktoberfest's Executive Director. "This achievement highlights the abundance of exceptional female leaders within our community. Recognizing, celebrating and amplifying women's achievements is crucial in our journey towards equality and this event embodies that mission."

This year's keynote speaker, sponsored by [Gowling WLG](#), Sarah Prevette, has developed transformational strategy for some of the world's most renowned brands including Google and Apple. Globally recognized for her work in human centered design and entrepreneurship, she is proud to work alongside an incredible team on transforming education.

"I am incredibly honored and thrilled to be speaking at this year's Women of the Year celebration," says Sarah Prevette, Founder & CEO at [Future Design School](#). "It is a privilege to celebrate 50 years of remarkable achievements by women who are making a difference in Waterloo Region as well as their industries. This event is a testament to the power of women supporting other women and I believe that when we uplift each other, we can achieve extraordinary things."

"Gowling WLG is extremely proud to return as the speaker sponsor for the Women of the Year event with Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest," adds Rosa Lupo, Partner, Gowlings WLG. "It is our pleasure to support the distinguished women leaders in our community and to be involved in the celebration of 50 years of female empowerment and innovation in the K-W area."

2025 Award Categories and Nominees:

Arts & Culture recognizes women for enriching the culture of our community through the creation or promotion of the arts on a volunteer or professional basis. **SPONSOR: SCOTIABANK**

Claudia Aguirre	Allison Dyjach	Mary Abdel-Malek Neil
Megha Birmiwai	Behnaz Fatemi	Pam Patel
Cora Black	Kathie Jordan	Kelly Pedro
Steph Boutari	Lauren Keating	Isabella Stefanescu
Tara Butler	Kathryn Ladano	Sarah Thompson
Angela Cox-Daly	Carin Lowerison	Yuehua Wu

Community Service recognizes women for generously volunteering their time to programs and services that make our community a better place. **SPONSOR: ROGERS TV**

Asma AlWahsh	Marcella Habermehl	Mona Loffelmann
Jacqueline Beckford-Henriques	Angie Hill	Alexandra Ann (Sandy) Milne
Crystal Blezard	Rahima Khatun (Khushi)	Danielle Morris
Jenny Charron	Marjorie Knight	Jennifer Peacock
Abby Cooper	Amanda Kroetsch	Amanda Pot
Joan Fisk	Taveena Kum	Stephanie Soulis
Cait Glasson	Karen Liphard	Tracy Valko

Educator (New in 2025!) recognizes women or empowering individuals and strengthening our community through outstanding contributions to education and lifelong learning. **SPONSOR: WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT**

SCHOOL BOARD

Jan Basso	Julie Hohner	Camelia Nunez
Mackenzie (Kenzie) Beisel	Lili Liu	Kennedy Paule
Paula Bender	Laura Matheson	Krysta Traianovski
Hannah Brown	Tham Nguyen	Meredith Woodwork
Sarah deHart	Lindsay Nickel	

Entrepreneur 40+ Years Old recognizes women for initiating and/or administering an enterprise or business.

SPONSOR: MIRANDA O'SULLIVAN, CHESTNUT PARK WEST

Aura Hertzong	Sandy Mlotschek	Angel Marie Reiner
Mary Beth Kennedy	Linda Okwell-Jenner	Jolanta Romel-Jarski
Kristy Miller	Ainsley Poirier-Craig	

Group Achievement recognizes achievements by a group of women that impact and/or improve our community or society. **SPONSOR: FOX FINANCIAL PLANNING**

The Bloom Team	She Shares Women's Giving Circle
LMcIntosh Hockey	Shelter Movers Southwestern Ontario
Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region	Women in Communications & Technology Mentoring Circles Program
She Is Your Neighbour	YW Club 84

Health & Wellness recognizes women for promoting and helping others achieve and promote mental, physical or spiritual well-being in their careers or community involvement. **SPONSOR: GREATER KITCHENER WATERLOO**

PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT

Lindsay Arbeau	Julie Norcott	Erin Seaton
Cathy Ding	Melissa Reid	Brookelynn Tookey
Chioma Efejedia		

Lifetime Achievement recognizes women for being role models, mentors and/or advocates for positive and social change throughout their lifetime. **SPONSOR: SCHLEGEL VILLAGES**

Jan Basso	Marcella Habermehl	Kristine Parsons
Cora Black	Angie Hill	Laura Potje
Brenna Bonn	Mary Beth Kennedy	Jolanta Romel-Jarski
Charmaine Dean	Marjorie Knight	Geraldine Stafford
Kim Decker	Jackie Lauer	Isabella Stefanescu
Cathy Ding	Karen Liphard	Marian Steffler
Joan Fisk	JoAnne McCormick	Cathy Snyder
Cait Glasson	Alexandra Ann (Sandy) Milne	Tracy Valko

Professional 40+ Years Old recognizes women for dedicating themselves to the pursuit of excellence in their chosen careers. **SPONSOR: HOME HARDWARE**

Brenna Bonn	Young-Shin Lee	Carolina Soares
Kim Decker	Dr. Laura Mae Lindo	Geraldine Stafford
Jennifer Gruber	JoAnne McCormick	Marian Steffler
Jennifer Haas	Kristine Parsons	Kim Wilhelm
Ashley Howat	Rebecca Schoenhardt	
Jackie Lauer	Cathy Snyder	

Rising Star Under 40 (New for 2025!) recognizes women for exceptional contributions to the advancement and empowerment of women in the trades sector. **SPONSOR: PILLER'S**

Jessica Chalk	Shannon Hall	Rebecca Lyons
Christine Clark	Stephanie Hebner	Lauren Martin
Erin D'Alessandro	Emma Jennings	Saba Oji
Elaine Declair	Faune Lang	Alicia Stuart
Afra Fatima	Mikaela Lewis	Rochelle Williams
Yessenia Guerrero	Robin Linder	Sanum Yousaf

Skilled Trades recognizes women for exceptional contributions to the advancement and empowerment of women in the trades sector. **SPONSOR: GRAND VALLEY CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION**

Jessica Allin	Jessica Gemmell	Emily Pyke
Soveigh Brasseur	Laura Potje	Brenda Walsh
Stefanie Bruinsma		

Science, Technology, Engineering & Math recognizes women for outstanding advancement to the field of STEM.

SPONSOR: PROFOUND IMPACT

Martha Breithaupt	Kimberly Hebeisen	Avvey Peters
Charmaine Dean	Ellyn Winters-Robinson	Amy Tai

Young Adult (14 to 23) recognizes women for leading by example and being a role model to their peers.

SPONSORS: CITY NEWS 570, COUNTRY 106.7 AND CHYM 96.7

Rose Aydin	Sarah Larochelle	Shreya Rao
Geri Mae Balbin	Madison Letizi	Sloan Stark
Zoe Channer	Miranda Moffat	Kennedy Taylor
Francesca Girmenia	Katia Mueller	Yuxin (Linda) Wang
Allison-Hannah Berwick Hernandez	Haniya Nazir	Elaine Xiao
Aasha Khan	Jessica Quinn	

Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Rogers Women of the Year is for all women. As in the past, nominations and nominees are inclusive of all women, non-binary, transgender, two-spirited, women of all classes, races, sexualities, ableness and identities.

For half a century, this event has been pivotal in recognizing and celebrating women's accomplishments, fostering equality and inspiring future generations in our Region. Women of the Year tickets and celebration tables are now on sale and selling quickly. Find information [HERE](#). Silent auction proceeds will support the [Oktoberfest Cares](#) initiative which provides funding for charitable partners and supports Festival initiatives that enrich our community and keep admission costs low or free.

We are grateful for our 2025 award category sponsors including décor partner [Harp & Fin](#). The Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Rogers Women of the Year Awards are proudly supported by [Rogers](#), [Rogers TV](#), [CHYM 96.7](#), [Country 106.7](#), [CityNews 570](#) and [Sherwood Events](#). Many thanks to our returning hosts for the evening, Robin & PJ from Country 106.7.

PHOTO ENCLOSED OF 2024 WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

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About [Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest](#)

The first Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest was celebrated in 1969 at Concordia Club in Kitchener, organized by a group of dedicated founders. The keg was tapped and history was made. Since then, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest has developed its own traditions, becoming one of the largest Bavarian Festivals outside of Germany. Tens of thousands of visitors celebrate annually in our Festhallen, at local restaurants and by attending one of our many family and cultural events. More than just biergartens, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is committed to supporting the cultural, economic and social vitality of Waterloo Region, bringing millions of dollars in economic benefit to the Region each year. *Oktoberfest Cares* provides funding for charitable partners and supports Festival initiatives that enrich our community such as the Onkel Hans Food Drive and keep admission costs low or free for favourites including the Women of the Year celebration and family-friendly events like KIDtoberfest, Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Willkommen Platz. For more information visit www.oktoberfest.ca.

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