

AWARD WINNER SPOTLIGHT

Karen Byers, Employee



Karen Byers was awarded the Special Recognition Award in the Employee Category at the 2016 Annual General Meeting. She embodies our philosophies and always goes the extra mile to ensure the individuals we support are fulfilling their lives. She encourages individuals to reach for their goals and gives her time and resources to listen and help in any way that she can.

Not only is she committed at work, she's also just as committed outside of work. She has been recognized for having a self advocate accompany her each year to the Annual Penticton Elvis Festival. This partnership celebrated its 10th year last year and is going strong! This symbiotic relationship was formed simply through the love of Elvis music and movies. Karen says, *"I've known Lillian for 20 years now. When I first learned about this festival, Lillian was my first choice when looking for someone to go with. For the first two or three years, it was just Lillian and I and now we have had several individuals join us throughout the years."*

The Annual Penticton Elvis Festival goes always leave Vancouver early Friday morning and return home late Sunday evening. Stops along the way, including the Blue Moose Cafe and Manning Park are part of the gang's annual "Elvis weekend" tradition. Once in Penticton, they always enjoy a swim, the farmer's market and the Antique Car Festival.

Last year they even managed to catch a parade!

The Annual Penticton Elvis Festival is an Elvis tribute artist competition. There are all sorts of Elvis' to be seen! The main events for Karen, Lillian and the rest of the crew are the Saturday night tribute show and the Sunday morning pancake breakfast and gospel in the park.

“ On these trips, my relationship with Lillian is not a staff/client one, but rather one of friendship, I just happen to be the one with the driver's licence! ”

We asked Karen what she enjoys most about this adventure and she said, *"My favorite thing about attending the Elvis Festival with Lillian is that she is just so much fun to be with. She loves the drive to Penticton including the nature along the way, the Columbian Ground squirrels and all of the birds."* In Penticton, Lillian loves talking to all the Elvis', shaking hands and giving lots of hugs. Lillian is very friendly and engaging and the joy she brings to others is very evident. Karen reminisces at the many wonderful memories she and Lillian have made together.

