

## AWARD WINNER SPOTLIGHT

### Marlee Walchuk, Community Member



Marlee Walchuk was awarded the Special Recognition Award in the Community Member Category at the 2016 Annual General Meeting. For many years, she has worked tirelessly with ConneXions on Mingle of the Jingles. Prior to each show, she gives countless hours of her time working with one of the participants, Jeremy to help prepare him for his performance. During the show, she acts as the emcee and also performs. Furthermore, her contributions to the silent action have helped raise additional funds for the society.

Marlee first got involved with Mingle of the Jingles, when her spouse Nathalie Callender, Program Manager at ConneXions was asked to produce the show in 2011. She wanted to help by bringing in a few professional acts to put in the mix and it was suggested that she emcee the event as well. With their combined experience, musical connections, ConneXions staff and volunteers, Mingle of the Jingles has blossomed into a stellar annual event!

For the past three years, she has been involved in either playing guitar for or helping Jeremy with his performance. The first time he sang on his own onstage, he brought the house down.

**“ There was not a dry eye in the theatre. That moment will stay with me forever... ”**

We asked Marlee what she enjoys most about her involvement with Mingle of the Jingles and she said, *“What I love most is seeing and hearing the raised awareness around people with disabilities that this show creates. Most people, myself included, have had very little, or no contact with differently-abled individuals; seeing them onstage, dancing, singing and getting to know them in the pre-show videos that Nathalie produces, completely changes one’s perspective. It’s beautiful.”*

**“ I love Christmas and would help produce any show but none other would bring this level of joy to the participants, audience members and I ... ”**



Marlee is an actor, singer and artist. In between paintings, she sings in a popular soul/funk band - Souled Out and is currently finishing up a run of Twelfth Night with the Western Gold Theatre Company. She also does marketing for Dr. Gidon Frame who has been extremely generous to Mingle of Jingles by donating anti-aging cosmetics and treatments every year to the silent auction and has been a gold level sponsor in the past.