

A 'FAMILY' AFFAIR

Maritime chapter receives accolades for its contributions to CHES

One of the highlights of the CHES National Conference is the awards presentation held during the gala banquet. This year, CHES Maritime came out on top in the friendly chapter competition, unseating three-time defending President's Award champ, CHES Ontario.

"We lost by such a small amount last year that we feel redeemed," says Maritime chapter chair, Helen Comeau.

This is the second time the chapter has won the award, the first being in fall 2015.

The President's Award is presented annually to the CHES chapter that demonstrates its commitment to education, administration and representation in the activities of the chapter and national board. Each chapter is scored on accounting practices, conference/education day, membership, chapter executive practices, committee work and additional offerings (from submitting articles to *Canadian Healthcare Facilities* to providing extra member benefits). Specifically, points are given for activities that benefit members and the work of CHES, such as number of meetings attended in the course of committee work and special education sessions. The recipient of the much-coveted award receives two CHES National Conference registrations and expenses to a maximum of \$2,500 each, as well as a trophy engraved with the victorious team's names.

"Our continued hard work and dedication paid off," says Comeau, who accepted the award on behalf of the chapter. "I couldn't be prouder of our team."

Particularly given the chapter executive has not been 'whole' for some time, losing the vice-chair of P.E.I. in 2017, a role it is still trying to fill.

"Thankfully, while our team is small, we're close and we help each other out whenever needed," says Comeau. "We're like a family."

As a result, the chapter has not suffered. In fact, the opposite is true: This past spring, CHES Maritime pulled off what's perhaps



▲ LEFT TO RIGHT: Gordon Jackson, Robert Barss, Andrew Bradley, Helen Comeau, Ken Morriscey, Mark McNeill and Kate Butler.

its most successful regional conference to date. Held May 5-7, in Moncton, N.B., more than 85 delegates attended the esteemed event. What's more, monies generated surpassed expectations, enabling the executive to cover the travel expenses of the entire team to this year's national conference in Saskatoon.

"It was an excellent learning and networking experience, and provided an opportunity for leadership growth," says Comeau, who became chapter chair in spring 2016.

Next year, the Maritime chapter will host the CHES National Conference in Halifax, Sept. 20-22. Planning is well underway. The venue (Halifax Convention Centre) and all activities have been booked, and companion program selected. The conference planning committee is currently working on the education portion based around the theme, 'Enriching Patient Experiences by Optimizing the Environment.'

At the same time, the chapter executive is busy organizing an education day for Nov. 19, at the Best

Western Glengarry in Truro, N.S. It is open to CHES Maritime members as well as non-member front line maintenance and operations workers in healthcare, both of which can attend at no cost.

This isn't the only instance where the chapter gives back to its membership. CHES Maritime offers several financial incentives, including free webinars, contributions to Canadian Certified Healthcare Facility Manager (CCHFM) exam fees, student bursaries and other rebates.

This past spring, Zoe Lucas was named the recipient of the 2019 Per Paasche bursary. The \$1,000 grant is presented annually to a family member of a Maritime chapter member to assist with their post-secondary education. Lucas is the niece of chapter member Lane Mingo. In September, she started at the University of Prince Edward Island, where she is working toward a bachelor of science.

"It's great to be able to help the next generation pursue a career in such an exciting field," says Comeau. ■