



Presented by Nancy Irvine, CAM President

The Public Service Award honours an individual or group who has performed a significant act or acts of moving-related service in the public interest, including in humanitarian achievements.

It's my pleasure to present the Public Service Award to Cynthia Mufandaedza from Best Movers in Yellowknife, NWT.

[nominated by Randy Moyo]

In August when 65% of the Northwest Territories residents were evacuated due to the wildfires, Cynthia went above and beyond to care for NWT residents in Alberta.

She organized an evacuee BBQ to get those residents together "for hugs and to just check on each other ... as some people were having a hard time."

At the event, a concern was raised that these displaced residents struggled to get to the evacuation meeting centre to get their three meals each day. Some community members had never left the Northwest Territories before the evacuation and did not know their way around.

*Cynthia and Nazim, a fellow NWT resident, were able to team up with the **Let's Help Society of Alberta** to provide daily meals delivered to hotels. At least 350 residents were served each evening.*

Her transportation logistics experience with Best Movers came in very handy as she was able to coordinate volunteers and negotiate for \$35,000 in funding from United Way NWT for this initiative.

But no matter how much moving experience she and Randy have, they found that the challenge of delivering meals to people spread across Edmonton surprising. In one of her interviews, she told CBC News that on the first night they spent almost six hours delivering 100 plates with other volunteers. Having chatted with Cynthia many times, I'm sure that with each delivery came love and compassion and a much-needed ear.

And speaking of Best Movers, all of this wonderful outpouring of support came at a time when Randy and Cynthia were also securing their moving operations, warehouse, equipment and making sure that their employees were looked after when the evacuation order came through. We communicated a few times during those days leading up to the evacuation. They had all well in hand, but still, it had to be stressful and challenging.

But before we go ahead, I want to take a moment to tell you a little bit more about this remarkable woman.

In 2018, Cynthia was elected to serve the residents of Yellowknife as their first Black City Councillor. When elected to the City of Yellowknife council, she also became the First Elected black person in the Northwest Territories.

Currently amongst many other projects and interests, Cynthia sits on the Board of Directors for the Stanton Territorial Hospital Foundation where she is passionate about the Foundation's cause. She is always excited to give back to the community and the North.

And for all of that, in 2020, Cynthia was honoured as one of the 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women.

And we're so happy to honour Cynthia ourselves with the 2023 CAM Public Service Award. Unfortunately, the airlines were not in Cynthia's favour and her and her husband's flight out of Yellowknife was cancelled and they were not able to attend. We will accept this on her behalf and get it to her.