

# Report to Council



**Date:** July 10, 2023  
**To:** Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Subject:** IABC Gold Quill Award  
**Department:** Corporate Communications

---

## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives for information the report from the Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services regarding the recognition of an IABC Gold Quill Award of Merit for Communications Excellence, dated July 10, 2023.

## **Purpose:**

To update Council on the receipt of an IABC Gold Quill Award

## **Background:**

For more than 40 years, the International Association of Business Communicator's Gold Quill Awards have recognized and awarded excellence in strategic communication worldwide. Gold Quill is the only awards program that honors the dedication, innovation and passion of communicators on a global scale.

All IABC Gold Quill Award entries are evaluated by international senior professional communicators. Many are either IABC accredited or certified by the Global Communication Certification Council. All entries are evaluated against established criteria aligned to IABC's Global Standard of the communication profession.

In 2023, awards were given out in 28 categories to projects from North America, Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa.

## **Discussion:**

The City of Kelowna received an Award of Merit in the category of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the Face Homelessness public awareness campaign which was fund by the Strengthening Communities Grant to help reduce the stigma for those who are living in our community without homes. The \$3.2 million grant is provided from the UBCM - Strengthening Communities' Services Program by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Funds from the grant were used by the City of Kelowna, PEOPLE Employment Services, Metro Community, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society and the Canadian Mental Health Association Kelowna to support critical services for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, including:

- Substantial reimbursement for design and construction of the current, purpose-built, temporary overnight sheltering site, plus the addition of personal belonging storage.
- Reimbursement and ongoing cost for operation, coordination, and management of the overnight sheltering site, a day use site, personal belonging storage, outreach support services, and access to personal hygiene services.
- An awareness campaign to change perceptions and reduce the stigma people who experience homelessness face.

\$250,000 of the \$3.2 million was directed to the campaign and that amount included a one-year term Communications Advisor to support the campaign development, execution and measurement across channels and events. This campaign supports Action 9.3 from Kelowna's Community Safety Plan to implement an anti-stigma campaign aimed to change people's perceptions and levels of understanding regarding homelessness, especially those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The integrated marketing campaign ran in 2022 and was produced in collaboration with City staff, the Central Okanagan Journey Home Society with input from local service providers and the Lived Experience Circle on Homelessness (LECoH). The campaign — centred on an animated video focusing on a child and parent and their interaction with individuals experiencing homelessness — was developed to help reduce stigma for those living in our community without homes. It encourages viewers to see the person beyond the stigma and understand our individual role in addressing homelessness. The campaign included online and out of home advertising, events, social media, and articles that highlighted the local lived experience of individuals living in supportive housing at Ellis Place.

The campaign was launched in the spring of 2022 to the community at an event featuring national advocate was Tim Richter, Founder, President and CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. BCHousing, RCMP, Interior Health, local homeless-serving sector organizations, the business community and other stakeholders were in attendance. The campaign run through the end of June 2022. The assets continue to be used on JourneyHome.ca and is available to other municipalities or senior levels of governments who are struggling with stigma and homelessness across Canada.

Overall the campaign had over 3.4 million impressions, earned coverage with 23 media stories and drove to the Journey Home website for the community to learn more about Kelowna's Journey Home Strategy. In addition, attitudes about homelessness were measured before the campaign launch and after its completion. While the campaign cannot be solely credited for changing attitudes in Kelowna, highlight results from pre to post-campaign survey:

- 11-point increase in the percentage of respondents who agreed helping people experiencing homelessness was a priority for them, from 33% to 44%.
- 9-point increase, from 70% to 79%, in respondents who believed addressing homelessness is a worthy goal that can be accomplished through an increase in shelter space, and supportive and affordable housing.

- 9-point jump in the percentage of respondents who believed it is possible to solve homelessness in Kelowna, from 59% to 68%.
- Survey results show consistent but modest improvement in attitudes toward homelessness on the whole.

The award was presented to Lindsay Thorimbert, the Communications Advisor who led the campaign development, at the IABC World Conference in Toronto in June. The City of Kelowna previously received Gold Quill Awards for the Pick Your Path to Kelowna 2040 which was an engagement project within the Official Community Plan in 2019, My Downtown: Bernard Avenue Revitalization Community Engagement in 2014 and Communications Audit and Organizational Review in 2012.

Submitted by: Lisa Corcoran, Communications Department Manager

**Approved for inclusion:**

CW