



**COMMUNITY
RECOGNITION**
★ **AWARDS** ★



★ **Monday, June 15, 2020** ★
7 p.m.
Virtual Ceremony



aurora.ca


AURORA



★ Message from the Mayor ★

It is an honour to present the Community Recognition Awards. This year our ceremony is presented virtually because of the global health pandemic. We are pleased that we are still able to recognize the important work from these special people.

Your contributions in creating a greener Aurora, helping to plan local cultural or community events, fundraising for the less fortunate or simply extending a helping hand to your neighbour exemplifies the traits of leaders and strong Town ambassadors.



On behalf of The Town of Aurora and Aurora Town Council, I want to extend my gratitude to all of our award recipients and nominees for your strong sense of civic responsibility and passion for enriching our community. Your compassion and dedication truly makes a difference. Good luck in your future endeavours!

Sincerely,

Mayor Tom Mrakas
Town of Aurora

★ *O Canada* ★

Nikita Riou Aurora's 2019 Teen Idol will lead us in the singing of our National

★ Honourable Mention to Barb Allan ★ Aurora's 2019 Citizen of the Year

Barb Allan is our outgoing 2019 Citizen of the Year. Barb is a dedicated volunteer who has selflessly given years of her time to the health and well-being of our community. She is well-known for her positive attitude and active involvement in numerous community organizations, including the creation of the The ABLE Network, a community-based program providing relevant inclusive work and recreation opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities.

★ Volunteer Service Awards ★

These awards are presented to outstanding volunteers in each of the Years of Service Categories for 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of continuous service to the Aurora community.

20 Years

Terry Sherin

25 Years

Vic Metcalfe

30 Years

**John O'Heir
John Thompson**

35 Years

**Alex Ansell
Ken McIssac
Grant Perry
Rob Whiting**

40 Years

Gary Kryshka





★ Youth Volunteer Award ★

This award is presented to a young citizen for their volunteer efforts and who has made a significant contribution to the community, by demonstrating their commitment to being a positive leader.

Karsen Roy

Karsen spreads sunshine and positivity wherever she goes. Whether she is volunteering with the special needs soccer program, on the ice with the younger Panthers, or helping at a water station with her hockey team for Run for the Cure, her smile and enthusiasm are infectious. As a high-level athlete, she is a positive role model for younger people and is the type of person who wants everyone to feel included. Karsen has volunteered on every level for the past four years at the Country Day School. She volunteered as a Peer Tutor, served as a Student Ambassador/Tour Guide for Open Houses, volunteered with Me to We, and organized a very successful Relay for Life as a House Captain, which raised more than \$20,000. In addition to all of that, she has donated her hair to the Canadian Cancer Society four times and has asked loved ones to donate to SickKids in place of birthday gifts. It is clear Karsen prioritizes helping others in any way she can.



★ Senior Volunteer Award ★

This award is presented to a citizen above the age of 55, who, through their volunteer efforts, has made a significant contribution to the community and has demonstrated their commitment to being a positive leader today and in the future.

Gary Kryshka

Over the past 40 years, Gary has committed himself to playing a key role in the success of Big Brothers Big Sisters of York. He has acted as Director, Treasurer and currently as the agency's Board Chair member. Gary is always the first one to step up with his wife Karen for volunteer shifts at such events like the Magna Hoedown, Bowl for Kids Sake, and the monthly Community Bingo. He has been devoted to the agency through challenging times and provides insightful knowledge to guide the group when times are tough. He has dedicated his volunteerism to young children in the community; enabling them to feel supported, heard, and given the opportunity to grow.





★ Green Award ★

This award is presented to an individual, business or community organization that supports the protection, preservation, sustainability or conservation of our natural environment. This award celebrates those who share the Town's commitment to creating a greener community.

Olivia Scott

Olivia is active in organizing community clean-ups. She independently spends her free time participating in green initiatives around her home, street and nearby public spaces, while encouraging neighbours and community members to do the same. Olivia noticed a lot of plastic found in her local environment due to it being blown out of nearby recycling bins. She initially started by wanting to learn more about this issue, which motivated her to pursue change for this local issue. Olivia designed a lid, which attaches to the recycle bin and stops items from being blown away. Overall, Olivia inspires all of us and does not let her age stop her from wanting to make an impactful difference for the environmental well being in the Town of Aurora.



★ Arts and Culture Award ★

Inspired by the Johnsons family, this award is presented to an individual or group that has enhanced our community through their support or promotion of culture, music, visual, performing, or the literary arts.

Theatre Aurora

Theatre Aurora has been a member of the Aurora community for more than six decades and is run entirely by a team of volunteers. These volunteers not only work on stage as actors, but also in other areas such as set design, building and dressing, lighting, costumes, props and produces five shows each season. Theatre Aurora is committed to fostering a respectful space where diversity, inclusion, fairness, and professional working relationships are always present. Theatre Aurora has participated in numerous community events and is committed to educating and supporting those who want to explore the world of theatre. Theatre Aurora has been providing thought provoking, emotional, hysterically funny and beautifully crafted live theatre for over 60 years to the community of Aurora.



★ Community Leadership Award ★

This award is presented to an individual or not-for-profit organization that has significantly enhanced the Town through their contributions, commitment and leadership in the areas of charitable giving, civic engagement, community events or community spirit.

Steve Falk

Steve is a larger than life character with a very caring and kind heart. He is the founding member and current leader of Soul Benefit and has been for the past 20 years. To date, it is estimated that Soul Benefit has raised over \$2,000,000 for charity. Steve is also a very committed and active leader in his church. He has been the Leader for Youthful Spirits Music for 12 years and volunteers with the Rise & Shine Community Breakfast program. He procures musical instruments for new immigrants and repairs donated bikes to be distributed to children in need. He contributes his time to organizations such as Southlake Hospital, Aurora Royal Canadian Legion, Special Olympics, Hope House Hospice, and assists with countless fundraisers in the community. Aurora is a better place with Steve.

The Optimist Club of Aurora

The Optimist Club of Aurora has been involved in supporting Aurora youth programs and activities for the last 35 years. The Club has supported youth through its donations to projects such as the Town of Aurora beach volleyball courts, Flip Side, the Highview accessible playground, Children's Safety Village, Theatre Aurora and many more. The Club provides sponsorships to outstanding students in Aurora high schools and contributes to a number of healthy snack programs at Aurora schools. They assist with multiple Town run events throughout the year and sponsor numerous sports teams to help make childrens' participation in sports more affordable for families. The Optimist Club of Aurora is truly a community leader which has positively impacted a great number of young people and the Aurora community through the years.



★ Good Neighbour Award ★

Inspired by Frank Camenzuli, this award is presented to someone who embodies what it means to be a good neighbour. This award recognizes and celebrates the simple acts of kindness and compassion that help create connected and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Sam Paputsis

Sam is an exemplary 'good neighbour'. During the winter, he will help shovel his neighbours' driveways. If someone is away on vacation, he will volunteer to watch over their house, retrieve their mail and take their newspaper inside. In one instance, one of his neighbours had an operation where they couldn't drive for a month. Sam didn't skip a beat and offered to drive and take them out for a coffee during the week so they could get out of the house. Sam is a reliable, trustworthy and outstanding neighbour that everyone would be fortunate to have on their street.



★ Community Safety Award ★

This award is presented to an individual dedicated to the development, promotion or support of initiatives that improve community safety. This award recognizes that safer communities only happen when individuals take action to make a difference.

Luka Miljanov

Luka has been 3D printing and building masks from polyactic acid to donate to local long-term care facilities in Aurora. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these facilities were not able to sustain the proper amount of Personal Protective Equipment that they needed. Luka chose to make the masks out of environmentally conscious material, which is renewable and would not have a large impact on the environment. Luka has donated 40 masks, with a goal to donate at least 100 in total. Luka recognized that essential health care workers deserve to feel secure and require these materials to do their job correctly and safely. He has displayed strong leadership in this area by his charitable and admirable act of using his own equipment and material to give back to support his community. Luka exemplifies kindness, innovation, selflessness and has inspired us all to help our community feel safe.

★ Good Business Award ★

This award is presented to an Aurora business that has shown its commitment to assisting Aurora's economic prosperity, corporate responsibility and community involvement through its ongoing support of charitable causes, events, or programs.

Joe Anselmo, Harvey's Swiss Chalet

Joe Anselmo, owner of Harvey's Swiss Chalet in Aurora, has gone above and beyond supporting the Aurora community. For the past three years, the restaurant has provided 250 free meals for Welcoming Arms during the Christmas holidays and has donated food to many fundraisers and organizations. The restaurant began to give meal discounts to healthcare workers for all their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The restaurant often provides free lunch for students that don't have enough funds and offers affordable lunches to school programs. Harvey's Swiss Chalet in Aurora has sponsored numerous soccer and baseball teams and continues to be a valuable part of the Aurora community. They show others that a for-profit business can make a difference in non-for-profit way.



★ Inclusivity Award ★

This award is presented to an individual, group or business, which has contributed to making the Town of Aurora a more accessible and/or inclusive place to live, work and play for all people.

Lisa Leoni

Lisa is the School Principal of Regency Acres Public School and has led numerous inclusive initiatives to support and inspire the students, parents and educators. Lisa has worked hard at developing an equitable and inclusive school for students and their families. By accomplishing this, she has led several initiatives and has partnered with numerous agencies and the broader community in order to support many Aurora families. She led a huge project called the "Mindfulness Room", which is a space in the school dedicated to support students' mental, emotional and social well-being during the day. Not only has Lisa focused on students, she has also concentrated on families to ensure they are welcomed and supported. When new families arrive in our community, she has assigns community supports and services that will visit them in their homes and help them with language barriers, as well as to navigate community services. Lisa has established respect, kindness and a strong sense of belonging, making the school a welcoming place for all to learn and grow.

★ Citizen of the Year Award ★

Presented by Mayor Tom Mrakas

This individual is selected by the Office of the Mayor in consultation with a small group of dedicated community volunteers. The award recipient has demonstrated all-round community involvement rather than a specific activity or contribution.



★ Thank you to the Community Recognition Awards Advisory ★
Committee for all their hard work and dedication to this event.

Mayor Tom Mrakas
Erin Cerenzia - Chair
Brian North - Co-Chair
Diane Buchanan
Paul Martin
Elaine Martini
Jo-anne Spitzer







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