

2018 Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarships go to two Williams grads



By Brock Weir

If your son or daughter has learned the ins and outs of fire and traffic safety at the York Region Safety Village in recent years, chances are they know Robert Lee.

Robert, who recently graduated from Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, has a passion for safety, dedicating a good chunk of his impressive 500 logged hours of volunteer time helping youngsters navigate our increasingly complicated world.

It should come as no surprise to anyone who has encountered him over his high school career that he is about to embark on the road to a career in law enforcement at Durham College this fall, but before he heads off, he got a welcome boost thanks to the legacy of late Aurora mayor John West.

Last month, Lee was one of two students awarded the John West Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarship, a \$1,000 grant established by a bequest Mr. West left to the Town recognizing students who have made a positive impact in the Aurora community and inspire and give us hope for the future.

Mr. West died in 2013 and since the award's inception, students entering their first year of full-time post-secondary study have been encouraged to put themselves forward and make their achievements known.

Applicants are evaluated on several criteria, including outstanding leadership qualities, involvement in worthwhile community service, volunteer commitment and giving back to the community, acting as an inspirational role model for Aurora, demonstrated excellence in personal achievements, a commitment to making life better for others, or perhaps contributed while living with a disability, or even performing acts of heroism or bravery.

Robert was secretary to the school's student Council and treasurer to his school's Art Council [and was] also a member of Youth Alive, which is a student club that fundraises for various organizations, stated Julie Stephenson, Youth Programmer for the Town of Aurora, introducing Mr. Lee to Council before he received his scholarship from Mayor Geoff Dawe. He has been a dedicated Best Buddy to students with exceptionalities for over two years. Best Buddies matches students with their peers who have intellectual or developmental disabilities foster one on one friendships and develop leadership opportunities.

Robert is a dedicated leader with a personal passion for initiatives involving safety and the care of others. He has volunteered for various organizations and consistently seeks out opportunities to educate others on personal and community safety. In his role as a volunteer at the Community Safety Village, Robert has assisted in teaching students from all around York Region about fire and traffic safety. He worked hard to give back to his community with almost 500 hours of community service, far above the amount required for the high school diploma. Robert's contributions and hard work will have lasting impacts on his school, peers and the wider community.

Joining Robert in the Class of 2018, is Josie Kearney who was named Aurora's Citizen of the Year this past spring.

Josie was recognized by Nichole Campsall, Youth and Community Development Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, for her leadership contributions both inside and outside the walls of Williams.

Josie recently graduated from Dr. G.W. Williams and is attending McMaster University in the Fall in the Health Sciences

program," said Ms. Campsall. "Josie was an executive member of her school's athletic Council, student lead on her school's Terry Fox team, leader of the Williams Habitat for Humanity project and captain of both her school's basketball and soccer teams. Josie is perhaps best known by her peers and community for her dedication to helping others.

"Josie founded an initiative called Change for Change. This campaign, which celebrated its second year in 2017, encouraged her classmates to raise money to provide toys for families over the holidays. Josie has also served as her school's head peer mentor, leading a team of other students to create positive changes in their school community. She has exhibited exemplary dedication to our community through volunteering her time and achieving high personal excellence in her career."