

Basso honoured with Youth Award for making community more inclusive



By Brock Weir

She has dedicated her life so far to making a positive difference in the lives of others within her community, and now Nicole Basso has been honoured by her community for her efforts.

Nicole, who will go into Grade 12 this fall at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, was honoured with the Youth Volunteer Achievement Award at the 2018 Community Recognition Awards.

She was singled out for her efforts in raising both funds and awareness for a number of community organizations, as well as for facilitating inclusivity within and beyond Williams' walls ranging from the LGBTQ2+ community to Syrian refugees.

"We are blessed to have so many giving individuals who call Aurora home through their many positive contributions to the lives of your fellow Aurorans. That is why we say you're in good company here in Aurora," said Brian North, emcee of the 2018 Community Recognition Awards. "We're a close-knit community comprised of remarkable individuals. Tonight we are here to celebrate our local volunteers. Actually, we can say our local heroes."

Each year, the Youth Volunteer Achievement Award is presented to a young citizen who has made a significant contribution to their community through positive leadership.

Nicole was recognized, in part, for her participation as an active member of Aurora's Youth Engagement Committee since 2016 where organizers say she "made her presence known by motivating her peers and inspiring meaningful conversations about community issues."

"Nicole has brought a meaningful voice to the Youth Engagement Community and has helped better our community through her involvement," said Mr. North. "She is also a volunteer with the Aurora Public Library and has taken on leadership roles on both her school's Equity Committee and Student Councils. Through her work on the Dr. G.W. Williams Equity Council, Nicole helped organize and facilitate a number of events for the community including mental health week, Rainbow week, and bullying prevention.

"She also has been a member of the Humanitarian Council, assisting the fundraising and raising awareness of charitable causes. Through Artists for Change, Nicole has helped plan and run a fundraising event for Syrian refugees and donated her own art to fundraising. Nicole is a compassionate and engaged youth who has brought positive ideas to each project or event she is working on, helping to move our community forward."

Receiving her award from Councillor Wendy Gaertner, Nicole kept her reasons for volunteering simple.

"For me, volunteering is really about making a difference, making a change," she said. "Even if some one person can make a small difference in the community and make it better for even one person, I think that is just amazing and that is why I volunteer. I volunteer just to make that little bit of difference, that little bit of change, in an individual's life."