

Community Recognition: Shirley Cook honoured for being a good neighbour with a bright ?Howdy Do?



By Brock Weir

Making the move into an assisted living facility can be a daunting prospect not only for the individual having to settle into a new environment, but also for the people who love them.

This was something recognized by Shirley Cook when she moved into Chartwell Aurora and, as a resident, she has made it her mission to help make for a more warm, welcoming environment.

Ms. Cook's efforts were rewarded when she received the 2018 Good Neighbour Award from the Town of Aurora.

The Good Neighbour Award was inspired by Frank Camenzuli and 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.?

Ms. Cook has done her best to create that connected and vibrant neighbourhood at Chartwell, being part of the ?Howdy Do Crew? that greets new residents and their families ?so they don't feel overwhelmed and alone in a very large transition of their lives.?

?Shirley Cook has been a resident of Chartwell Aurora LTC Residence since 2009 and has been actively volunteering within the home ever since,? said event emcee Brian North reading Ms. Cook's citation. ?Shirley graciously meets others wherever she may be and always puts others first. She has a smile that lights up a room and once you get to know her you will see the mischievous sparkle in her eye that shows she doesn't miss a thing. She is one of those people who is a carrier for contagious happiness ? in other words, she [has a way] of making you feel like you're worth a billion bucks and having you pass it on to the next person.

?Shirley is also part of the Howdy Do Crew which greets new residents and their families so they don't feel so overwhelmed and alone during this transition in their lives. Although Chartwell Aurora is a cozy home, it is also a large home and can feel daunting until one gets to know their way around. Shirley makes sure they receive a brochure and a follow-up visit, if they wish, to provide a friendly face. Shirley's world may be limited to the community limits of Chartwell Aurora, but her heart touches so many residents since moving there.?

Ms. Cook accepted the award with thanks and modesty.

?When I first came into Chartwell, I always wanted something to do,? she said. ?They realised that they could talk to us and we suggested we [might meet] the people coming in who are very nervous about leaving their homes, which is a hard thing to do. We thought, maybe if we had a club or someone who could walk around and introduce them to staff and a few things about where we live.

?I am certainly very glad and surprised to get the award. I do appreciate the people that I work with and I see all the time. They are great people. I would like to thank everyone for my award. They say, ?Oh, you deserve it, Shirley.' I don't think so, but that's fine! I am very proud.?