

Everyone needs to find their 'Rotary Moment' says returning president



(Rotarians, along with Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, honoured Auroran founder Ron Wallace, centre, with his third Paul Harris Award on Monday night. The award recognizes significant contributions to the Rotary Club. Auroran photo by Brock Weir)

By Brock Weir

When Greg Foster moved from Alliston to Aurora over 10 years ago, he was looking for ways to give back in his new community.

There, he was an active member of the Lions Club, but here in Aurora, it was the Rotary Club which caught his attention. He knew ahead of time it was an organization that dedicates their time to giving back to the community and, after going through their doors, he says he knew he was in the right place.

In short order, he was Director of Community Service for the organization, looking for ways the efforts of Rotarians could be best spent. For him, that was Southlake and their pediatric cancer care centre.

Soon after, Mr. Foster began his first stint as Rotary's president and, on Monday, he formally took the helm of the club once again.

Monday's event, held at the Aurora Cultural Centre, was not your typical meeting of the Rotary Executive. It was a way to give a two-way thanks to and from organizations within the local community who have benefited from Rotary funds and volunteer efforts.

Such organizations gathered in the Meridian Gallery included Big Brothers Big Sisters of York, the Aurora Sport Hall of Fame, Komeka Kitchen Primary School, the Aurora Farmers' Market, Aurora Pathfinders, Welcome Table, CHATS ? Community Home Assistance to Seniors, the Salvation Army, last year's 125th anniversary reunion for Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, as well as local individuals who have made a difference on the dance stage to the international stage.

While Rotary casts a wide net in terms of the groups and individuals they support in the community, some might be surprised that Rotary Aurora numbers just 14 members. These numbers have remained relatively static over the last few years, and Mr. Foster says many of them have been president at least once or twice for one-year terms.

'People may have their misconceptions of what is expected, but I am a big believer that when you join anything, whether it is a church or whether it is a service group, whether it is a poker night with the boys, if you believe in an organization and what it stands for, you have to make it a part of your daily or weekly routine.

'When you find an organization you feel passionate about, it doesn't become an obligation. It becomes an enjoyable evening out. You need to find your Rotary Moment and everyone's Rotary Moment is different. When you find that moment, that is when you

become a proud Rotarian because it struck a chord with you.?

Across Town, however, numbers indicate that is a chord that hasn't sounded out quite as often as it used to. When asked how he would like to make sure Rotary stays relevant to the community over his new term as president, he points to Rotary being the largest international service club in the world, being at the forefront of eradicating polio and poverty across the globe.

?Rotary is international, but I think Rotary in Aurora needs to become more prevalent,? he said, noting Rotary's active annual organization of Dance In The Park, held at the end June each year on the eve of Canada Day, Ribfest, and their active participation on last year's Aurora 150 Celebrations. ?Despite our numbers, we're very active and what we accomplish as a club I think is a real tribute to the quality of its members.

?The connections that can be made through Rotary can accomplish anything. I say to potential members that come in that you can make Rotary whatever it is you want it to be. I have met many, many people who have come in and had an idea, presented it and worked it through Rotary and got their idea basically around the world. What Rotary does in the local community is just a small token of what Rotary does around the world.?