

Individuals and groups exemplifying late Queen's dedication to public service honoured by MP



The second Elizabethan Era may have come to a close upon the death of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8, but the legacy of public service left behind by the Commonwealth's longest-reigning monarch continues to live on through highlighting individuals and groups who share this same dedication.

Earlier this month, Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen awarded a second group of community builders in both communities with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pin.

Struck by the Government of Canada to mark the 70th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne, MP Van Bynen presented the second and final round of keepsakes to recognize 'their commitment to community' at a special ceremony held at the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

'The Canadian Platinum Jubilee emblem was created to mark the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne,' said MP Van Bynen at the outset of recognizing residents in this way. 'The emblem is a symbolic statement of the enduring relationship between Canada and the Crown, as personified by our country's Head of State.

'Margaret Mead wrote: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.' I believe this quote captures the spirit and will of the group honoured today. Perhaps they have not changed the world, but without a doubt they have made our communities better places to live. Each of the recipients has touched their neighbours with kindness, supported those in need, inspired others to join a movement, and demonstrated that regardless of age, we can make a positive difference to those around us.

'Thank you for your compassion, energy, and love. I encourage you and others to continue reaching out to those in need, and through the spirit of your actions, let them know they are not alone. Let our communities continue to benefit from your generosity.'

Among the recent recipients were:

- Inn from the Cold ' Martha Berry (Volunteer Program Lead) and Executive Director Ann Watson. In recognition of their work meeting the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Aurora Food Pantry ' Executive Director Sandra Seepaul and Board Chair Allison Stuart. In recognition of providing food assistance to individuals and families in need.
- Southlake Regional Health Centre ' CEO Arden Krystal and Tyler Chalk. In recognition of 'building healthy communities through outstanding care, innovative partnerships, and amazing people.'
- Central York Fire Services '

Chief Ian Laing and Deputy Chief Rocco Volpe. In recognition of responding to the community effectively, professionally and competently to serve a wide range of emergencies and hazards and to provide comprehensive public safety education programs, fire safety inspections and investigation of fire incidents. - Newmarket Food Pantry ? Liz Blight and Susan Little. For addressing food security issues faced by the residents of Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. - Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association ? Jerisha Grant-Hall and Keisha Davis. For their commitment to engaging African Canadian communities and its allies through program delivery, education and partnership, to cultivate an empowered and united Black community in Newmarket. - Blue Door Support Services ? CEO Michael Braithwaite. For services providing emergency housing in York Region as well offering supports for children, youth, men, women and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness. - Community Living Central York ? CEO Andrew Fagan and Board President Suzanne Connor. In recognition of providing support to people with intellectual disabilities. - Big Brothers Big Sisters of York ? Gary Kryshka and Katie Lowes. For providing life-changing mentoring relationships for children and youth across York Region and Bradford West Gwillimbury. - Aurora Black Community Association ? President Phiona Durrant and Bobbie Marshall. For advancing the diversity of Aurora by delivering programs and events that dismantle racism, support inclusion and equity, Black excellence, education and economic development. - Optimist Club of Newmarket ? Vice President Rhonda St. John, Director Bob Thivierge. For being at the forefront of making a difference in children's lives since 1949? through providing young people with the values and skills they need to become the exceptional community leaders of tomorrow.? - Margaret Bahen Hospice & Doane House Hospice ? Carol Edward, Lisa Coyne-Baxter, Ann Boden. For services providing hospice services to individuals with life-limiting illness in a home-like environment.

Next Week: The Able Network, The Aurora Legion, York Region Paramedic Services, and more.