

Nominate your unsung heroes for Community Recognition Awards



Mayor Dawe with Citizen of the Year Diane Buchanan presided over Arctic Adventure.

By Brock Weir

Whether they have dedicated their lives to organizations big and small, or simply lent a helping hand to a neighbour in need, there are heroes around every corner in Aurora and now is the time to shine a light on their achievements.

Aurora is in the final weeks of accepting nominations for the Community Recognition Awards, a special program recognizing the individuals in our community who make a difference.

With nominations being accepted at Town Hall though Friday, March 5, winners will be recognized at the end of May with a special ceremony that will put a glitzy new spin on an Aurora tradition.

‘One of the true essences of volunteerism is you’re just doing it because you think it is a good thing to do, rather than waving your arms to say, ‘Hey, look at me!’’ says Mayor Geoff Dawe. ‘We really want to emphasize volunteerism. We want to inspire people to volunteer in the community. It doesn’t have to be substantial; it can just be volunteering to help your neighbour shovel their driveway or collect their mail on a really bad day. It is pretty easy to do, it doesn’t really cost much, and it is, quite frankly, a great payback.’

Nominating someone is also an easy thing to do and, as for costs, it costs nothing at all. Nomination forms are available at Town Hall or online at www.aurora.ca and categories recognize a wide array of contributions including youth volunteerism, achievements in the environment, sport, arts and culture, and accessibility, as well as recognizing community organizers and organizations that have made an impact, non-profits, as well as businesses. And then there is the granddaddy of them all, the Citizen of the Year Award.

The Good Business Award is a new award for 2016, but it is not a Business Achievement Award in the vein of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor stresses.

‘There was some talk around our committee on what to actually call our award,’ he says. ‘‘Socially Involved Corporations’ seemed to be too complex a title, but this is the type of thing the award is going for.’

As the Community Recognition Awards committee looked for ways to breathe new life in to the ceremony, they looked to the one-off ceremony held in 2011 which was a more formal affair complete with the red carpet treatment, multimedia presentations

dedicated to the honourees, not to mention a black tie or two.

Despite his wanting to keep some of the bigger details under wraps, there seems to be a winning formula as Mayor Dawe says he is seeing "renewed enthusiasm" and engagement in the process.

"You make the effort to nominate people in order to recognize the work that they have done," he says. "That is a given, but you also want to nominate people so others will get the idea that maybe there are other things they can do around Town. When I read the biographies of some of the people who were nominated to see what they have been involved in, it is amazing and you wonder whether or not they have the time for a regular nine to five job!"