

Volunteers honoured for more than 300 collective years of service to community



A year or two of diligent work can make a significant difference in the lives of others, but a decade or more can leave a legacy that lasts a lifetime.

But how about a century's worth ? or three?

Earlier this year, men and women representing more than 300 collective years of volunteer service to the local community were recognized by the Town of Aurora at the annual Community Recognition Awards.

Hosted in Council Chambers, the ceremony was a chance to honour individuals who have given more than 20 years of their time to a given service club or non-profit organization ? and this year, nominators rose to the challenge of putting forward the names of residents who had made lasting contributions.

?Volunteers don't give back to be recognized; many are probably uncomfortable with the recognition, but it is definitely recognition that is deserved and it is special when it happens,? said Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Magna's Neighbourhood Network, who emceed this year's ceremony. ?And it encourages others to get involved and give back to the community.?

20 YEARS

Barbara Barker ? 2nd Aurora Scouting Group

?In the 20 years Barbara has been involved with Scouting Aurora, she has held many roles like Beaver Leader, Treasurer, she's coordinated Apple Day, the annual banquet, and whenever she's had the opportunity, Barbara has also focused her efforts on speaking to parents and advocating for the benefits of the Scouting movement, which is so important. Barbara has received the Long Service Medal and bar to the Medal of Good Service from Scouts Canada for all her Volunteer Commitments.?

Terri & Wayne Briggs ? 5th Aurora Scouting Group

?Very soon after Wayne and Terry moved to Aurora, they became involved with the Scouting group. After a couple of years, they ran The Pack, offering adventures and creative solutions for survival in the outdoors to local youths. When the Town approached the Fifth Aurora Scouting Group to partner for the new Haunted Forest event back in 2007, Wayne and Terri jumped in, providing countless static displays and operating an entire family-friendly cabin. During COVID they also supported the Town by providing

displays for the Haunted Greenhouse and contributed their props to other participants in the display. Wayne and Terri have also volunteered for many other Town events including the Santa Under the Stars parade and Canada Day for over a decade. Together, Terri and Wayne have affected the lives of more than 300 youth over the 20 years they have been in Aurora.?

Peter Thorman ? Marquee Theatrical Productions

?Peter is an exceptional member of the Marquee volunteer team. He's a master carpenter and helps build the various theatre sets needed for productions. When he first started with Marquee, his day job was actually constructing industrial buildings but those projects lacked a little creativity, so Peter decided to volunteer with Marquee and get those creative juices flowing.?

William McCleary ? Second Aurora Scouting Group

?William has taken on many roles with the group over the last 20 years. He has led the Beaver colony, then moved onto the Cubs, the Scouts and eventually the Venturers group. With each group, William took on the position of contact leader whose responsibilities included organizing the weekly meetings, training new volunteers, and working with the other sections to ensure the organization ran smoothly. William has shown hundreds of youth the purpose and benefits of the scouting movement and for his contributions to Scouting, William has been awarded the Long Service Medal, the Medal of Merit, and the Commemorative Scouting Centennial Medal from Scouts Canada.?

25 YEARS Mary Haberer ? Aurora Girl Guides

?Mary is a die-hard Girl Guide. She is one of those Girl Guides who has never really left the organization. After she completed her own time as Girl Guide, she went from being a Youth member to becoming a Sparks Guider and she is currently volunteering in a Brownie unit. Mary is known as Mary Smiley Owl because she is always smiling and has the most positive attitude and is contagious with all the girls in her unit.?

30 YEARS Suzanne Charlebois-Bin ? Scouts Canada

?Suzanne has volunteered for many unit positions with Sparks, Brownies, Pathfinders, and Ranger leader units and [is] often volunteering in multiple units at a time. Suzanne has also been active on her local Girl Guide Council as a Membership Advisor, a Treasurer, a Program Advisor, and most importantly District Commissioner where she oversaw 15 units, ensuring that the needs of the volunteers were met. Suzanne has also volunteered at the week-long camp for many years where she holds down the position of Site Guide, Program Chair and Camp Director. This camp was 100 per cent staffed by volunteers, which is incredible, and hosts up to 125 kids for a week each summer.?

35 YEARS

Bob Cole ? 2nd Aurora Scouting Group

?Within the club, Bob is known as Scouter Bob and he has been a Group Committee member, a Group Commissioner, Quarter Master and a Scouter helping in all sections and most positions. He was also Assistant Deputy Commissioner for this area of South Lake Simcoe and when other volunteers have taken on leadership roles, Bob takes the time to help them grow. He helps mentor them and they help learn in their volunteer positions. Another loved role of Bob, as he's known as Lt. Col. Flapjack, [is at] the Fort George Scout Brigade. This camp brings scouting personnel from Canada and the United States to fall and winter activities at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Bob's contributions to the Scouting movement have had a positive impact on hundreds of youth within the community.?

40 YEARS Carol Preston ? Royal Canadian Legion

?Carol started volunteering with the Legion in 1977 and since then has held multiple positions on the Ladies Auxiliary, such as

Secretary, Second Vice President, President, Treasurer and more. She has also held executive positions within the branch, such as President, and Chairperson of Training and Organization Development, just to name a few. She's always willing to lend a hand. Behind the scenes, she jumps in whenever it is needed, like cleaning the kitchen, especially when no one is around. Carol is proactive in getting all her tasks done and she never needs to be asked for help. Her presence has been an inspiration around the Legion for many decades. She is a hardworking volunteer and she's lots of fun to be around.?

Robert Kennedy ? 2nd Aurora Scouting Group

?Robert is presently the Group Commissioner of the 2nd Aurora Scouting Group. He has been a Beaver leader, Cub leader, Scout leader, and has worked as camp staff at two scouting facilities in Haliburton and Woodland Trails. He is also very hands-on when it comes to assisting the sections at all of their events and will participate in many of their meetings. Recently when the group was unable to find indoor facilities during the pandemic, he made contacts with all of his associates and was able to secure meeting space, which was so important. Robert has advanced training in the Scouts section and for his service to Scouting he has been awarded the Long Service Medal and the Medal of Merit from Scouts Canada.

45 YEARS Deborah Simmerson ? Aurora Girl Guides

?Deborah has been a Spark Guider, a Guide Guider and is currently a Brownie Guider with the 3rd Aurora Brownies. She has also had many local Girl Guide Council positions over the years including membership advisor, training advisor, and lending her expertise to spend countless hours of time to mentor many, many new volunteers who have joined the Girl Guides. In the past, she has also volunteered with the Girl Guides of Canada for their week-long camp where they provide challenging programming and care to our youth.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter