

Aurora Farmers' Market honours bumper crop of volunteers



By Brock Weir

Over the past 16 years, the Aurora Farmers' Market has become a Saturday morning meeting place for countless Aurora residents, but there is a lot of behind-the-scenes work that goes on to make it possible each market season.

Seven such volunteers who dedicate countless hours each year to make it all happen were recently honoured by Mayor Geoff Dawe, and Andy Sampogna, Chair of the Aurora Farmers' Market, allowing them to take a well-earned pause to be recognized.

‘It is my honour, privilege and pleasure to be here today to present the volunteer awards for the Aurora Farmers' Market,’ said Mayor Dawe. ‘The Farmers' Market is really such a great addition to our Town. I want to thank Andy and the whole team for the work they have done to put this on, rain or shine, or really hot.’

First up to receive an award for her five years of volunteer service was Victoria McArthur, who was honoured alongside her father Bruce.

‘Victoria has been an active volunteer with the Farmers' market for more than five years,’ said Mayor Dawe, reading her citation. ‘She has been on the Committee, she has served as treasurer, and has coordinated the Farmers' Market participation at the Aurora Chamber Street Festival and the Aurora Home Show. With the help of Bruce, she has designed, built and decorated the Farmers' Market booth and recruited volunteers.’

Bruce too was hailed as an ‘enthusiastic volunteer’ who has pitched in ‘designing and building displays at the Home Show and the Street Festival.’

Next up was Anna Kroeplin, who was celebrated for her more than five years as Market Chair, where she created ‘new policies to ensure the safety of the vendors and customers at the Market, and she has assisted with bridging the communication between the vendors and the Market to ensure its ongoing success.’

A mainstay for hungry shoppers and area employees each weekday in Aurora's Downtown Core, Gabriel Schacher of Gabriel's Café brings his delicious food to the Market each Saturday as well. He was also recognized with the Five Year award.

‘He has been involved with the Farmers' market since its inception in 2002,’ said Mayor Dawe of Gabriel's citation. ‘Gabriel has been a volunteer and an active member of the Committee for more than five years, served as the sponsorship coordinator for the Market, and he has graciously hosted the Market Committee meetings held monthly.’

Another familiar face at the market, behind the counter of Jan's Country Pantry, and at Aurora Home Hardware, is Frank Condlin, who was recognized with the Five Year award as well.

Frank has been a committed volunteer for more than five years, said Mayor Dawe in Frank's citation. His most significant volunteer contribution has been his role as coordinator for the Farmers' Market's participation in the annual Canada Day Parade. Frank designed the float, gathered the fresh produce from the vendors, constructed and decorated the float, coordinated all the volunteers and musicians, who participated, drove the tractor that pulled the float, and also he has helped me many times at the hardware store with plumbing needs!

Frank's wife, Jan Freedman of Jan's Country Pantry, and a participant in the market since inception, and a former Market Chair, was one of two recipients of honours recognizing ten years of service.

Jan has served as Chair, Vice Chair of the Market, and is also the Farmers' Market representative for the Aurora Cultural Roundtable. Jan represents the Aurora Farmers' Market at many activities, discussions, and authors a column that appears every two weeks in The Auroran about the Farmers' Market.

Rounding out the list of honourees was Shirley Wiedemeyer of Nature's Rainbow.

Shirley has been a vendor at the Aurora Farmers' Market since the inception and that is pretty long term. She has served on the Committee as a treasurer, has assisted with many community events, she is also one of the Farmers' Market representatives for the Aurora Cultural Roundtable. Thank you for the work you have done to make this such a success.