

Aurora salutes Leaders of Tomorrow with John West Scholarships



Student leaders were honoured Town Hall last week with the John West Memorial Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarship.

Established by the Town of Aurora following a bequest from late Aurora mayor John West, the scholarship honours two high school graduates each year who are moving on to post-secondary education, whether it is university or college, who have shown a remarkable commitment to leadership within their school or wider community.

This year's recipients are Ananya Murlidharan, who graduated from Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School last month, along with Anika Radulescu, a recent graduate of St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Secondary School.

“Ananya will be attending McMaster University next year where she plans to study, make lifelong friendships and discover her future,” said Miranda Link, Youth and Community Development Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, in a presentation to Council. “This year's first winner is Anaya Murlidharan who recently graduated from Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School. Ananya will be attending McMaster University next year where she plans to study, make lifelong friendships and discover her future. Ananya has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to academic excellence, consistently making honour roll throughout her academic career. As the vice president and head editor of the school newspaper, Words by Wildcats, she has empowered her fellow writers. Her leadership extends beyond academics as seen in her roles as an English tutor and executive member of Change by Coffee and fundraising coach for Relay for Life.

“Her dedication to volunteerism is equally impressive. At the Sringeri Vidy Bharati Foundation, she has contributed over 350 hours supporting events and community engagement, creating a vibrant and inclusive space for all. Her efforts have been recognized with several awards, including the Youth Volunteer Award, Ontario Volunteer Service Youth Award, and the Give Back Award. Ananya's commitment to volunteerism, leadership and personal excellence exemplifies the qualities we strive to honour and inspire in our youth. Her dedication not only enriches the lives of those around her, but also gives us hope for a brighter future.”

Ananya was present in Council Chambers on July 9 to receive her scholarship, while Radulescu participated in the presentation remotely, with Mayor Tom Mrakas promising to present the scholarship in person when possible.

Radulescu, who will begin her post-secondary studies in Business Administration at Brock University this fall, pursuing an International Double Degree program, was saluted for her long-standing drive to give back to Aurora.

“Anika's commitment to volunteerism is evident through her extensive involvement at the Aurora Community Tennis Centre where she has dedicated over 138 hours teaching tennis and promoting an active lifestyle among the youth,” said Link. “She has also been

instrumental in revitalizing tennis at St. Max, serving as a team captain and inspiring her peers to embrace sportsmanship and teamwork. In addition to her athletic achievements, Anika's excelled academically as a member of the Advanced Placement and French Immersion programs, consistently achieving honour roll status throughout her High School career. Her leadership as Athletic Council President has not only fostered a spirit of inclusivity and participation, but has also contributed to the growth of the school's athletics community and won her the athletic leadership award.

?Her commitment to community service extends beyond sports as shown by her participation in Town events and charitable initiatives, including the Aurora Food Pantry and various other school-driven food drives. Anika's dedication to making a positive impact in Aurora exemplifies the values that we celebrate today.?

By Brock Weir