

Aurora's future sports stars honoured as Athletes of the Year



By Brock Weir

Aurora's brightest student athletes have been recognized by Sport Aurora and the Town for their prowess on the field, on the ice, and in the pool as Aurora's 2019 Student Athletes of the Year.

Nearly 40 elementary and secondary school students gathered at Town Hall recently, cheered on by their parents, school faculty, friends and peers to receive their recognition, an annual summer tradition at Council.

Facilitated by Sport Aurora, the Student Athletes of the Year program is part of the organization's mandate to "develop sports and recreation in our community for all ages, genders and abilities," says Sport Aurora president Sandra Manherz.

"Each athlete was selected and named by their school for athletic excellence in their chosen sport," said Ms. Manherz at the presentation. "Sport Aurora has brought them together under one roof so we can acknowledge their exceptional contributions and highlight their achievement in our community."

"Attracting young people into sport programs engages active minds, promotes physical and mental fitness, builds teamwork, communication skills, humility, integrity, passion, enthusiasm and strong self-esteem and self confidence, qualities that are well-represented in the room this evening and will serve our athletes well into their futures. Who knows, maybe we have the future hall of fame in our midst right now as well."

This year's honourees are:

Chidubem Azurunwa (Hartman PS)

Kate Bingman (Aurora Heights PS)

Joshua Blades (Highview PS)

Elle Brodie (Rick Hansen PS)

Cole Brown (St Jerome CES)

Mikayla Cranney (Devins Drive PS)

Aryan Dham (Rick Hansen PS)

William Dodd (Lester B. Pearson PS)

Bradley Gardiner (Regency Acres PS)

Carter Gillies

Aneisha Gobbels (St. Jerome CES)

Jordan Green (Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School)

Cameron Hunter (Wellington PS)

Taryn Joy (Wellington PS)

Hunter Kim (Lester B. Pearson PS)

Kalista Kurtes (Highview PS)

Bianca Lodi (Light of Christ CES)

Christian Marshall (Aurora Heights PS)

Morgan McGee (Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School)

Owen McNamara (Wellington PS)

Andrew Mettel (Light of Christ CES)

Cameron Moir (Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School)

Gabriella Mueller (Our Lady of Grace CES)

Michael Murphy (Holy Spirit CES)

Owen Nichol (Aurora Heights PS)

Joshua Nicholson (Cardinal Carter CHS)

Jidechukw Oto (Cardinal Carter CHS)

Alieya Pires (Cardinal Carter CHS)

Sophia Purcell (Light of Christ CES)

Derese Ross (Devins Drive PS)

Julia Rubino (Holy Spirit CES)

Colin Sinclair (Lester B. Pearson PS)

Trevor Smith (Aurora Grove PS)

Lucas Vacca (St. Joseph CES)

Matthew Velenti (Our Lady of Grace CES)

Ryan Weeks (St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS)

Natassjeka Whyte (Wellington Public School)

Lily Zapata (Regency Acres PS)

Edward Zhytenyov (Light of Christ CES)

Among the dignitaries on hand to help celebrate the sports stars of tomorrow were Mayor Tom Mrakas, Council, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa and, representing Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott, Dawn Gallagher Murphy.

?I want to congratulate all of you,? said Mr. Parsa. ?I just recently had the opportunity to celebrate as Jordan Binnington brought the Stanley Cup to Richmond Hill and it was a great opportunity to stand next to Jordan as he shared some of the stories about how he became the athlete he is today: the troubles he had to go through to get here. I want to congratulate you, your parents, I want to congratulate Sport Aurora and the Town, Mayor and all the Councillors [for being here] to celebrate your achievements.?

Added Councillor John Gallo: ?There's not much that rivals seeing the success of our youth and the joy that they bring to our communities.?