

Business and community leaders honoured with King Charles III Coronation Medal



Community-builders in Aurora and Newmarket were honoured for their work on December 13 as MP Tony Van Bynen presented 20 residents with the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

Created by the Federal Government last year to mark the Coronation of Charles III and Queen Camilla on May 6, 2023, the honour was intended to honour those who have made their country, their province, and/or their community better places.

Honoured on December 13 at a ceremony held at Newmarket's Old Town Hall were:

Sajel Bellon

Michael Braithwaite

Major Robert Brain

Kirby Brock

Geoff Brown

Dan Banks

Robert Cole

Michael Croxon

Juliane Goyette

Jerisha Grant-Hall

Lori Hoyes

Arif Khan

Glenn Marais

Brian North

Jackie Playter

Sarah Riddell

Peter Van Schaik

Doug Steele

Beth Stevenson

Hilary Van Welter

"I hope you wear your medal with pride," said the MP. "For your compassion, for your energy, for your kindness, for your energy, and for your love I thank you. I encourage you to continue making a positive difference, reach out to those in need and through the spirit of your actions, let them know that they are not alone, that our communities continue to benefit from your generosity."

Following last week's feature, we continue our look at recipients that live, work or have had a direct impact on Aurora residents, including business leaders that have had an indelible impact on local healthcare.

PETER VAN SCHAIK

"Founder of auto parts manufacture Van Rob Inc and Chairman of Van Rob Realty, [Van Schaik] is a long-time Southlake Foundation leadership volunteer," reads his citation. "Peter currently serves as co-chair of [Southlake's] Philanthropy Cabinet and has been a member of the Southlake Foundation Board of Directors since 2018. Peter was recognized as Aurora's Citizen of the Year in 2017 [and his] exemplary dedication to leadership includes crucial contributions to several fundraising campaigns. In 2006 to 2010, Peter was co-chair of the \$64 million Count on Me campaign, inspiring grassroots support to build Southlake's Regional Cancer Centre, which ensures that our communities have access to first-rate cancer care. He was also Chair of Images for Life campaign, which raised \$16 million between 2011 and 2015 to upgrade and replace critical diagnostic imaging equipment across the hospital. Peter also served as the honorary chair of the Happy Hearts campaign at Community Living Central York's new expanded location in Newmarket, a campaign that raised more than \$5 million to create a new and improved central location on Penrose Street to meet the demand of the agencies' service in the community."

MICHAEL CROXON

"Michael is president and CEO of NewRoads Automotive Group and truly understands that building a vibrant, better community is a step to building a better business. He is a founding member of the Southlake Foundation's Philanthropy Cabinet since 2018, a group of community leaders who act as ambassadors and connectors supporting Southlake. Michael's support for Southlake spans over a decade, demonstrating his unwavering commitment as a passionate volunteer, donor and corporate sponsor through NewRoads. His annual NewRoads Lake Ride cycling event has raised over \$870,000 since 2016. He and his wife Sharon's philanthropic leadership were instrumental in the resounding success of Southlake's Better Begins Today mental health campaign which raised \$7.5 million to upgrade the hospital's existing mental health care spaces and build new space to handle increased capacity. Michael's charitable support is felt throughout the community. His commitment to arts and culture resulted in the naming of the Newmarket Theatre to the NewRoads Performing Arts Centre. In addition, through his automotive group, he's the sponsor of Girls Night Out in support of Girls Inc of York Region."

BRIAN NORTH

“Brian North is what optimists aspire to be. He injects his positivity into various community initiatives, including Regional fundraisers and environmental cleanups. He has shared his time with numerous organizations, including Easter Seals, Habitat for Humanity, Scouts Canada, York Small Business Enterprise Centre, and Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation. Brian is a member of the Oddfellows Aurora Lodge 148 and has served as Chair of the Rebuild committee for the Aurora United Church since 2014. He supports crafting wind phones, an unconnected rotary-style phone used to communicate thoughts and feelings to deceased loved ones as part of the mourning process.” Paying tribute to his role as one of Santa's helpers over the Christmas season, his citation recognizes his commitment to “spreading joy over the holidays” at many events, including the recent Aurora Christmas Market.

STAFF SERGEANT SARAH RIDDELL

“A mental health advocate, Sarah Riddell has re-shaped how York Regional Police officers respond to mental health needs in the community. Among her achievements are she created an exhaustive mental health strategy, successfully obtained a Solicitor General Grant expanding training for officers and the community. She doubled staffing for their mental health support team, created the Mental Health Engagement and Outreach Team consisting of officers and crisis workers, she built positive relationships with marginalized communities, implemented community safety and wellbeing plan, developed child, youth and family situation tables in four identified communities of York, and developed and implemented youth mental health outreach. She is identified as a leader in mental health response for policing.”

By Brock Weir