

## Canada 150 medals honour community's unsung heroes



By Brock Weir

They are fuelled by a passion for community, but they often put this passion in action quietly and with little fanfare. That all changed this fall, however, when Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson honoured 150 residents of the riding with a special medal to mark a very special occasion.

The best and brightest volunteers from Newmarket-Aurora filled Northridge Community Church as one member of the community for each of Canada's 150 years was recognized for their 'unsung' heroism.

Whether they have worked behind the scenes as advocates for food security, seniors, or LGBTQ rights, each of the 150 individuals were, after a call for nominations was put out this past summer, nominated by members of the community at large for their 'outstanding volunteer service and dedication to the community.'

'We wanted people who contribute to the community on a regular basis and just help make Newmarket-Aurora a better place to live through their own volunteer efforts,' says Mr. Peterson looking back on the ceremony. 'What struck me was the number of people I hadn't heard of, the unsung heroes who were nominated. It was great to learn about so many organizations and great people in the community that a lot of people don't even know are around and all the great work people are doing.'

What struck Mr. Peterson about each of the recipients, he says, was a common refrain when he presented them with the medals themselves. More often than not they said, 'I can't believe I was nominated' or 'I don't even know why [my name] was put forward.'

'It was just the humility of people who were nominated; it just becomes such a routine and part of their daily life - their volunteer efforts, whether it was the hospital or a non-profit, or with sports teams or youth organizations, they didn't see themselves as anything special. It was just such a normal part of their daily lives they didn't realise someone else would see them as playing such an important role in our community,' he says. 'To be honest, that overwhelmed me at some points. These are the people who make our community such a great place to live.'

These people were, in alphabetical order:

Jim Abram  
Susan Abram  
Elaine Adam  
Naqi Ashan  
Jim Alexander  
Alex Ansell  
Ken Antaya  
Tyler Barker  
Dorian Baxter  
Jacque Bayley  
Melanie Bell  
Martha Berry  
Jean-Paul Bichay  
Elizabeth Blight

Tom Boswell  
Kirk Bowden  
Phyllis Brady  
Laurie Braekboer  
Marjorie Brewster  
Judy Brunton  
Rod Bruton  
Nancy Cameron  
Lynda Carusi  
Erin Cerenzia  
Bill Chadwick  
Tracee Chambers  
Don Chretien  
Rob Clark  
Michelle Clayton Wood  
Julie Cochrane  
Linda Condy  
Tom Connor  
Crystal Cook  
Judy Craig  
Jennifer Cuypers  
Rosemarie D'Aguiar  
Claire D'Aurore  
Karey Dawe  
John Dowson  
Angel Dupee  
Chris Dupee  
Paul Dutton  
Lily Edmunds  
Chris Emanuel  
Carrie Emerson  
Leslie Everson  
Jacqueline FainGold  
Robert Fairs  
Bonnie Fleishaker  
Roy George  
Rosalyn Gonsalves  
Kerry Greico  
Matt Haggerty  
David Hanna  
Dave Hanson  
John Hardy  
Roy Harrison  
Athol Hart  
Beth Hart  
Patricia Hawke  
Elisabeth Hempen  
Steve Hinder  
James Hoyes  
Lori Hoyes

Maureen Huismans  
Rob Hums  
Jacqueline Hunt  
Wasim Jarrah  
Paul Jones  
Jill Kellie  
Erika Kerwin  
Chan Khamphoommee  
Greg Knuth  
Danielle Koren  
Teresa Kruze  
Alda Lima  
Reggie Lima  
John Loughry  
Rich Lunney  
Janis Luttrell  
Richard MacLeod  
Glenn Marais  
Donelda Martin  
Gary Marston  
Graeme Mason  
Don McCallum  
Eric McCartney  
Sandra McCleary  
Don McKnight  
Steve McNaught  
Glen McRobbie  
Juliane McTavish-Goyette  
Peter Miller  
Kevin Mills  
Adam Mobbs  
Melanie Moffat  
Trudy Montgomery  
Jacob Montgomery  
Jim Nesbitt  
James Nuttall  
Brian Patterson  
Tom Pearson  
Tara Peel  
Judy Perry  
Rohan Persaud  
Glenn Playter  
Jackie Playter  
Juliana Playter  
Wes Playter  
Susan Popper  
Rick Preston  
Keith Profit  
John Rank  
Tammy Raper

Joyce Remy  
Karen Richards  
David Robinson  
Richard Roos  
Al Rover  
Marilyn Savage  
Doug Scott  
Alejandro Segura  
Lea Seymour  
Melissa Shafa  
Terry Sherin  
Gina Shillolo  
Ranji Singh  
Marcia Sinclair  
Dean Smalley  
Michael Smith  
Marilyn Sorochan  
Elizabeth Sparling  
Joe Sponga  
Mike Springford  
Sean Stephens  
Barry Stock  
Fred Stoneman  
Peter Sturup  
Murray Taylor  
Tom Taylor  
Karin Theron  
Lena Thorogood  
Roxanne Van Bynen  
Chole Vargas  
Bessie Vlasis  
Gail Waller  
David Wattling  
Dave Williams  
Frank Young  
Claudius Zujew

“I hope the people of Newmarket-Aurora realise how fortunate we are to live in a community where there are so many people who make giving back part of their daily routine and making giving back part of their lives,” says Mr. Peterson. “I have two young children who are very active in sports and they have great coaches and great organizations that are all volunteers and we're very blessed and fortunate.

“We live in the greatest community in Canada, or one of the greatest communities in Canada, and a big part of that is the quality of the volunteers and the quantity of volunteers we have.”

Looking back over the Canada 150 commemorations in 2017, Mr. Peterson says the observances, from the Canada Day bash to Aurora's inaugural Pow-Wow served to show “how far Canada, as a country, has come in 150 years and how much further we still have to go and what we can do.”

“Every Canadian should be proud to be Canadian and proud to be part of a country like Canada and accept the fact we have accomplished a lot but we are just beginning,” says Mr. Peterson. “There is much more to do and many more ways to ensure Canada remains a progressive nation, a beacon to many in the world on how to get certain things right. I just think it was a great year for Canada to rally around the maple leaf and keep working hard to make the country better.”