

Cardinal Carter students honoured for Character, heroism



By Jeff Doner

Back in September 2013, brothers Colten and Luke Rybuck were just out to buy a new video game when they heard a smoke alarm and someone calling for help in a nearby house.

The two brothers did not hesitate and immediately jumped to action to help save a 70-year-old man from inside the house. ?At first I couldn't really believe what was happening,? Colten recalled. ?It was hard to take it all in.?

Upon reaching the front door, Colten called 911, while Luke kicked open the door, only to then battle thick, black smoke rushing out from inside.

?We heard him yelling for help and our natural instinct was just to help him and that's what we tried doing,? Luke added. ?We were trying to make sense of it at first and it just didn't seem real. Then when we realized what was going on?it was pretty crazy.?

At the 8th Annual York Region Character Community Awards last week, the two Cardinal Carter High School students were presented with the Community Hero award by York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe.

?Tonight is all about celebrating character and these are two young fellas that have really stepped up from a character attribute to show how important, in their own mind, it is to look after your community and they did a really great deed,? Jolliffe said. ?I'm very impressed ? two young fellas stepping in and rescuing a 70-year-old.?

In the end, the 70-year-old man and the two boys were treated for smoke inhalation, but all are perfectly fine thanks to the boys' actions.

Colten is in Grade 12 and is currently studying to become an automotive service technician, while Luke (Grade 11) has his sights set on someday becoming a police officer, something Chief Jolliffe thought was fitting given the circumstances.

?I think that's really cool,? Jolliffe said. ?This is why we as an organization are a sponsor here, to encourage youth to engage in their community. As a police service, that's highly important for us.?

Despite their brave actions, the two remain modest about winning the award.

?We weren't expecting this, we were there and just trying to help, but it feels good to be recognized by the community,? Luke said.

Regional Chairman Bill Fisch also honoured at awards

Recently announcing his retirement from years of public service, Regional Chairman and York Region CEO Bill Fisch was also honoured with the Character Champion award.

The award is presented by the Character Community Foundation of York Region in recognition of outstanding work in championing the Character Community movement in York Region.

Fisch's first foray into politics began in 1988 as a Councillor in Markham and he was elected as a Regional Councillor for Markham in 1994.

Over the years, he has spent much time improving the community by working with the York Regional Police Services Board, the Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital, GO Transit Board, the United Way, and recently helping to bring the Special Olympics to York Region.