

Community Recognition Awards: Andrew Watt recognized for going the extra mile with Good Neighbour Award



It doesn't take a lot to do a good deed, but all too often it goes unrecognized.

That was not the case in the year that was for Andrew Watt as he was honoured by the Town of Aurora with the 2023 Good Neighbour Award, part of the Town's Community Recognition Awards (CRA) program.

The Good Neighbour Award is handed out each year to an individual who embodies what it means to be a good neighbour – the simple acts of kindness and compassion that helps create connected and vibrant neighbourhoods.

A resident of Aurora for more than 20 years, Watt was saluted by CRA emcee Mayor Tom Mrakas as an individual who continually helps out his neighbours.

During the pandemic he became the neighbourhood bike mechanic and encouraged the families on the street to allow him to tune up their bikes and in no time he had almost the whole street out biking. Many will recall our last snowfall as a really heavy one. Immediately following the snowfall, Andy went and got out his snow blower and not only did his driveway and windrow but ended up doing almost every single driveway on his street. This wasn't just a one-time gesture; whenever Andy has been able to help out during weather events, he has been there for everyone. Andy does these acts of kindness without any expectation of thanks.

People on their street know how lucky they are to have such a great neighbour like Andy. Andy's efforts are contagious and makes everyone want to extend their time and energy to help someone. Aside from being a great neighbour on their street, he is also a great neighbour in the overall community as he also coaches hockey and has been contributing to the hockey life in Aurora. Andy continues to help wherever he can. His efforts and kindness exemplify what a good neighbour is.

Accepting the award, Watt said he was really surprised to be nominated and reflected back to when he first moved to the community.

I came from Toronto and within the first few days of being in Aurora, actually on the very first day, I met a lot of people who are still on my street to this day, he said. I am over in the Regency Acres area and remain friends with them right from the word go. To give you an idea, the person who actually nominated me is directly across the street.

I tried to watch out for all of my neighbours, but sometimes you just don't know what is going on with them. I typically will watch

for something that is not normal. For instance, maybe a driveway hasn't been shovelled or maybe some leaves that haven't been cleared. Typically, without going up and asking for permission I just go ahead and do it, and a lot of times two-, three-, four-weeks later the person will emerge and come up to me and say, 'Thank you very much. I have been sick for a while?' and it is a good feeling when they do thank you. I am humbled by it, just as I am to be nominated for this award, and it is greatly appreciated.?

By Brock Weir
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