

CYFS? Airey honoured with Jim Allen Award at Recognition Ceremony



?Honoured? was the only way Central York Fire Services (CYFS) Captain Chris Airey had to describe the feeling of being awarded the 2022 Jim Allen Award at Aurora's newest fire hall on Thursday evening.

Established by the CYFS in 2018, the Jim Allen Award recognizes significant contributions towards the development of department personnel, training, and education.

The award was doubly significant for Airey as not only is he dedicated to training and fire education, but Allen himself was also a key player in setting Airey on the path towards community service.

?To be proficient, you have to understand the what, the why, practice the how, and have the right approach and mindset to bring it all together,? said the CYFS in its citation, focusing on ?skills, knowledge, and attitude,? as keys to success.

These elements were exemplified throughout the CYFS' 2022 Recognition Ceremony, held at the new fire hall near St. John's Sideroad and Earl Stewart Drive, on November 3.

The first such ceremony since the start of the global pandemic, and one that just happened to coincide with the CYFS' 20th anniversary of becoming a consolidated fire service between Aurora and Newmarket, it honoured new recruits and long-time members.

It was also the first opportunity for the Department to award ?wings? for their new Air Division, which uses unmanned aerial devices or drones in the firefighting process.?

?I'm not saying we have an air force, but we have a start,? joked CYFS Chief Ian Laing at the ceremony.

?Working together is the secret of our success,? he added. ?And when you work together, you achieve better results.?

Coming together to pay tribute to these successes last week were MPPs Dawn Gallagher Murphy and Michael Parsa, Mayor Tom Mrakas, several members of Newmarket Council, and Jane Beakbane representing the office of MP Leah Taylor Roy.

Speaking on the MP's behalf, Beakbane paid personal tribute to members of the CYFS sharing a moving story of how these responders were first on the scene when Ms. Taylor Roy's husband collapsed at home with a massive heart attack this past summer and, thanks to their quick action, is now on the road to recovery.

Saluting CYFS' members community contributions were a common theme for dignitaries in attendance, including Gallagher Murphy for ensuring the safety of people's lives and providing the care and support they require in their time of need.

I want you to know how much we appreciate it, not as elected officials, but as individuals in the community because when you put on the uniform and protect us, when you go into danger when we're retreating, just know that every single one of us are pulling for you," Parsa noted.

Added Mrakas: As first responders, educators and role models, you play an important role in what makes Aurora such a wonderful place to live, work and play.

The reality is that the job of a firefighter is not an easy one. It takes hard work, dedication, bravery and sacrifice. The sacrifices you make in serving our community are not yours alone. Your families have also sacrificed in many ways, supporting you as you dedicated your professional life to protecting our community.

As firefighters, you set an excellent example for others and are an inspiration to our residents. You are a calming presence in the face of crisis. You are an image of hope in situations that seem hopeless. You are the role models our young people look up to. Whether educating people about fire safety or responding to an emergency, you represent professionalism, compassion, and good character.

Education, professionalism, compassion, and good character were all attributes used to describe Airey as he accepted the award, which took the form of a gilded fire axe mounted to a plaque. In turn, Airey paid tribute to the man the award is named after, and who joined him on the dais.

Training and facilitating others has been a passion and privilege and a big part of my career," said Airey. To be nominated and considered for this award is really special and humbling. To anyone on the department who thought that I deserve this award, I thank you and I really appreciate it. [Allen] was the first person who taught me what it was like to be a trainer and the many faces that a trainer should have not only being serious at times when it is needed but also how to have fun.

Instructing, training and facilitating not only with the CYFS but also the Fire College has filled me with so many great memories and I have had the luxury of working and networking with so many amazing and passionate people. I feel lucky to have had all the experiences I've gained and much knowledge I have learned from all of those that not only I have instructed with but participated in the courses I've been involved in.

This profession really is a life-long learning experience and I look forward to what the rest of my career will be. Training and facilitating with Central York is easy and it is made even easier by all the smart, knowledgeable people all around me who I basically don't train, I just tweak here and there.

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