

Good Neighbour Award-winner 'has a heart' for community



Alma Durkin may not think of herself as embodying the essence of what it means to be a good neighbour, but those who know her seem to have a differing opinion!

This past spring, Durkin, 95, was recognized by the Town of Aurora with the 2022 Good Neighbour Award. Presented each year to someone who represents that very spirit in a celebration of 'the simple acts of kindness and compassion that help create connected and vibrant communities,' this year's recipient, who served in the British Women's Territorial Land Army in the Second World War, has a long history that fits the bill.

'This year, we congratulate Alma Durkin, who is an all-encompassing good neighbour in her new community of the Meadows of Aurora,' said 2022 Community Recognition Awards emcee Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Neighbourhood Network. 'Alma joined the community at the Meadows of Aurora in the last few years and has been a great neighbour to not only the residents there, but the larger Aurora community.'

'In 2020, at the age of 93 years young, Alma organized a food drive in her neighbourhood. She created a flier and had a neighbour help distribute these flyers around the community. She contacted the Aurora Food Pantry and found out what was urgently and most needed. Alma's food drive successfully brought the neighbours together and resulted in a large donation of food to the Aurora Food Pantry. This year, Alma decided to create a new fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. In honour of Valentine's Day, she knitted hearts and sold them in their neighbourhood. This created a wonderful buzz in the Meadows and brought people together. She also continues to create smiles and welcomes all those who are in her presence. Her efforts and kindness exemplify what a good neighbour is.'

Accepting her award, Durkin explained she decided to crochet the hearts along with the slogan, 'Have a Heart.'

'I made a lot of them because they kept asking for them and in the end it [raised] \$600 for Heart and Stroke alone and that was really nice,' she said. 'I don't really consider myself a good neighbour, but evidently everybody else does. You have to just be aware of people and when you see a need you can think of something to do.'

By Brock Weir
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