

Help recognize a local hero at the 2025 Community Recognition Awards

Deadline for submissions set for March 28

Everyday heroes are all around us, from a neighbour helping you clear your windrow to a coach helping a young athlete reach their full potential on the ice.

This act of simply lending a hand often goes unrecognized, but you can change that by nominating your fellow Auroran for a Community Recognition Award.

A way for the Town of Aurora to honour the volunteers that make the community flourish, nominations are now being accepted through March 28 in the following categories:

- VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD - Awarded to individuals with 5, 10 or 15 years of continued service within an organization; - YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARD ? Awarded to a youth up to the age of 19 (as of March 28, 2025) who, through their volunteer efforts, has made a significant contribution to the community and has demonstrated their commitment to being a positive leader today and in the future; - OLDER ADULT VOLUNTEER AWARD ? Presented to an older adult who, during or after 55 years of age, has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to volunteering in different fields such as community service, education, and/or humanitarian activities; - GREEN AWARD ? Honouring an individual, business, or community organization that supports the protection, preservation, sustainability, or conservation of our natural environment; - ARTS & CULTURE AWARD ? This award is presented to an individual or group that has enhanced our community through their support or promotion of arts and culture, including music, visual, performing, or literary arts; - COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD ? Presented to an individual, business, or community organization that has significantly enhanced the Town of Aurora through their contribution, commitment, and leadership in the areas of charitable giving, civic engagement, community events, or community spirit; - GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARD ? Presented to someone who goes above and beyond to be a good neighbour in their neighbourhood. By recognizing those who inspire others, this award celebrates the simple acts of kindness and compassion that help to create connected and vibrant neighbourhoods; - GOOD BUSINESS AWARD -- Presented to a Town of Aurora business that has shown its commitment to assisting Aurora's economic prosperity, corporate responsibility, and community involvement through its ongoing support of charitable causes, events, or programs; - INCLUSIVITY AWARD ? Presented to an individual, group, or business which has contributed to making the Town of Aurora a more accessible and/or inclusive place to live, work, and play for all people regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or disability; - COMMUNITY SAFETY AWARD ? Presented to an individual or organization that is dedicated to the development, promotion, or support of initiatives that improve community safety. This award recognizes how safer communities only happen when individuals take action to make a difference; - CITIZEN OF THE YEAR ? An annual award recognizing the exceptional contributions made by a local citizen to our community.

?Aurora's Community Recognition Awards celebrate the invaluable contributions of our volunteers,? says the Town. ?By honouring these dedicated individuals and businesses, we highlight their significant impact and inspire others who make a difference in our community.?

Honoured last year with the Citizen of the Year before was tireless volunteer Vern Cunningham.

As his time as Citizen of the Year approaches its final months, he says the Community Recognition Awards is a great way for individuals to shine a light on people who have made a real difference.

?[The Award] made me very proud to be a citizen of Aurora and have the recognition of the Town for the efforts I have put through

to make it a better place for everybody," says Cunningham. "We don't do these things for the recognition, but we do it just because we like doing it, we like giving back to the Town. It's just something that a lot of us volunteers do to help out and the recognition is like the icing on the cake."

"But, we don't do it for the icing ? we do it for the cake," he laughs.

Taking the time to put a name forward for one of the Community Recognition Awards is a way to see your neighbours recognized, he says, and also a way to give back if you're unable to donate hours of your time to community organizations and initiatives.

"The nice thing about [the ceremony] is people get to see their neighbours," he says. "It's not people who are high up politically or high up financially; it's your regular neighbour who gets recognition ? like Sam Saberi at Tina's Grill who served meals to people and does a great job."

"If you can't get involved in volunteering because you have commitments, and a lot of people are families of two wage earners, have kids in a lot of sports, it's very difficult for them to give a lot of time to volunteering ? but sometimes if they can recognize their friends for the work that they do, even hockey or soccer coaches, I would encourage them to do that and, when they are able, to volunteer themselves, to step up, and make the Town a better place for everybody."

For more information on the Community Recognition Awards, including the nomination process, visit aurora.ca/cra.

By Brock Weir