

Local Chambers of Commerce honour Top 40 Under 40 in business

It was an evening of celebration for the local business community on Thursday night as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the Central York Chamber of Commerce came together to honour the Top 40 Under 40 in Aurora, Newmarket, and East Gwillimbury.

Held at the Stonehaven Banquet Hall on Eric T. Smith Way, it was an informal way to celebrate younger local business leaders who are making a difference in the areas the Chambers support.

"Business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals do not operate within municipal boundaries," said Alison Mumford, Executive Director at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. "The collaboration between the Aurora Chamber and Central York Chamber reflects the reality of our regional economy. By recognizing these 40 individuals together, we celebrate not only their personal achievements, but also the strength, innovation, and leadership that exists across Aurora, Newmarket, and East Gwillimbury."

Over the next several weeks, The Auroran will share profiles of those honoured by the Chambers, highlighting their business contributions as well as the ways they support the community.

RILEY ALLEN ? Founder, Riley Socks Apparel. ?Riley Allen is the founder of Riley Socks Apparel, a purpose-driven brand focused on storytelling, resilience, and community impact. A childhood cancer survivor, she uses her personal experience to inspire others and raise awareness through her work and advocacy. Through her brand, she has led initiatives supporting organizations such as SickKids, Hope Air, Ronald McDonald House Toronto, Southlake Health, and the Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation, including fundraising and a 'Buy One, Give One' campaign. In 2025, she launched a podcast with another survivor and expanded her brand internationally with a release in New Zealand. Riley is also active in community engagement, including public speaking and completing her first 10km run, and is recognized for building a platform that combines entrepreneurship with giving back and advocacy.?

JESSY BROWN ? Volunteer Program Lead, CHATS. ?Jessie Brown is the Volunteer Program Lead at Community & Home Assistance to Seniors where she focuses on volunteer engagement, program development, and client care for older adults. Her work is rooted in compassionate, relationship-centred support and community-based services. She began her career in front-line adult day programs, building experience in person-centred care, and later moved into program coordination and leadership roles, including digital storytelling and relationship-based care initiatives. In her current role, she has led a full refresh of the Volunteer Program, improving recruitment, onboarding, and training systems. Jessie is recognized for her collaborative leadership and continued professional growth in community care.?

AMANDA SCARLATO-BITTNER ? Creative Director, Niche Décor. ?[Amanda is] known for designing thoughtful, transformative spaces that enhance clients' everyday lives. She is passionate about the connection between design and well-being, bringing creativity, integrity, and a strong understanding of how spaces shape families and individuals. Her career began with camera-ready interiors for Love It or List It and display windows for the Hudson's Bay Company before returning to residential design at Niche Décor. Hired as a Junior Designer during the pandemic, she quickly rose to Creative Director within five years. Amanda is also dedicated to mentorship, guiding students and interns who often go on to join the industry. She has helped expand Niche Décor into a lifestyle brand through initiatives like a lookbook magazine, a Dialogue Series, and community pop-ups featuring local businesses.?

BRITTNEY MEGANN ? Founder, Socials & Stilettos. ?Socials & Stilettos is a marketing agency focused on empowering entrepreneurs, especially women, to build confident brands. After a serious car accident at 17, she began social media marketing from home and turned it into a thriving business serving local and global clients, including Adobe. She has since grown the agency into an established company with a headquarters in Aurora and contributes to initiatives like Adobe Live. Brittney also runs community workshops and events that support small business owners and collaboration. She is committed to mentorship, building a creative team culture, and making marketing more accessible while creating opportunities for others.?

INGIE MEHMET ? Registered Social Worker, Registered Psychotherapist. ?She is a clinical supervisor at Addictions Services Central Ontario, where she supports clients and clinical teams through trauma-informed, evidence-based care and clinical oversight of multiple platforms. She played a key role in developing Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) clinic models, originally based on her 2016 graduate research on opioid crisis care gaps. Her work helped support the expansion of RAAM clinics across multiple regions, improving access to addiction and mental health services. Ingie is also involved in system-level committees and partnerships focused on improving care gap pathways and clinician wellbeing, and she is recognized for advancing both clinical practice and community impact.?

MELANIE MUIRHEAD ? Co-founder, Our Happy Place Supportive Services. ?Our Happy Place [is] a federally-registered non-profit providing inclusive, community-based programs for neurodiverse adults. She co-founded the organization to address gaps in local services and has helped grow it into a fully operating program offering enrichment, life-skills development, and social connection. Under her leadership, Our Happy Place has grown into a thriving community organization that provides meaningful programs and opportunities for neurodiverse adults. She has led initiatives such as the sold-out Happiness & Harmony fundraiser and the Box of Happiness fundraiser, while fostering strong partnerships and promoting inclusion and belonging within the community.?

VERONIKA NISTAS ? Founder and Clinical Director, Great Gains Therapy. ?She leads clinical programs supporting children and families, particularly those impacted by autism and developmental needs. She is a Registered Behaviour Analyst and holds a Master of Education in Applied Behavioural Analysis from Western University, and also teaches part-time at Seneca Polytechnic. In 2025, she opened the Great Gains Therapy Centre, expanding services to include structured social skills groups and specialized programs. She also has led a community fundraiser that raised over \$11,000 to help reduce financial barriers for families accessing therapy. Veronika is recognized for building a practice that combines clinical care with improving access and support for families in the community.?

DR. AVNEED PARMAR ? Certified Physician, Medical Director of Skintology Health and Wellness Centre. ?She founded [Skintology] in 2019 to improve access to skin health care. She has supported over 10,000 patients through the clinic, focusing on education-driven and accessible dermatological and aesthetic care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she kept the clinic open for essential procedures such as skin biopsies and expanded patient access when other services were limited. She is also a national and international trainer in injectable and laser treatments. Dr. Parmar is recognized for combining clinical care, education and community work, including partnerships with Southlake Hospital and support for women-in-business and local initiatives.?

AIDA POURYANASAB ? Founder, Aizadfood. ?Aizadfood is a local business focused on healthy, honest food and strong community values. She built the company from the ground up through hard work, local partnerships, and a commitment to quality ingredients with no added sugar or preservatives. In 2025, Aizadfood received the People's Choice Award in Aurora, reflecting strong community support through markets, school events, and local involvement. The business has expanded across Canada via Amazon while staying rooted locally. Under Aida's leadership, Aizadfood has earned over 70 five-star Google reviews, grown steadily, and built a mostly female team focused on healthy living. She also supports local farmers, food rescue initiatives, and community giving.?

JULIEN LAURION ? Owner, Julien Laurion Real Estate. ?He combines real estate expertise with residential renovations to help clients make informed decisions and maximize property value. His work is focused on trust, long-term relationships, and guiding families through major life transitions. He has supported homeowners in increasing sale values through strategic renovation planning, in some cases adding over \$100,000 in value. His business is largely built on referrals and repeat clients. Julien serves on the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Board and Executive Committee and has volunteered with the York Regional Police and the Optimist Club of Aurora. He is also active in local community events and initiatives supporting business growth and development.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter