

## Local environmental efforts recognized by Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority



(Lester B. Pearson's Eco Team celebrates receiving a grant earlier this year, a feat which caught the attention of the LSRCA this month. Auroran photo by Jeff Doner)

### By Brock Weir

Individuals who have contributed to bettering the health of the Lake Simcoe Watershed, in which Aurora lies, were saluted for their efforts last week by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA).

Over 20 people, service groups and businesses were recognized by the LSRCA at their annual awards ceremony. Their efforts included a posthumous award to John Tran of the George R. Richardson Conservation Award of Honour for his over 30 years of work dedicated to stormwater management and other environmental initiatives, as well as awards to groups such as the Brock Sportsmen for their work with waterfowl and the Town of East Gwillimbury for their pioneering work in retrofitting ponds to reduce phosphorous being downloaded into the watershed.

Locally, students from Lester B. Pearson Public School were recognized with Education Awards for their in-school green initiatives.

“During the 2013 – 2014 year, this certified Ontario EcoSchool had an eco-team of about 62 students from Grades 2 to 8,” said the LSRCA. “The students organized a number of conservation programs, sold fillable water bottles to family and friends, raising \$650 and received an Ontario Ministry of Education \$1,000 grant which allowed them to purchase a water refilling station, keeping up to 25,000 disposable water bottles per year out of landfill.”

The Pioneering Green Communities Award, which was initiated in 2013 to recognize individuals or groups who have fostered important connections between the ecological and built spheres were awarded to Barrie teacher Melissa Hunter for involving more than 200 students in ecological efforts in the watershed, as well as the York Region Geocachers Club, which serves Aurora and Newmarket.

“In 2013 – 2014, [the club] hosted clean-up events at Sheppard's Bush and Thornton Bales Conservation areas known as CITO – Cache In Trash Out – and encourages geocachers to continually practice CITO while on the trails and parks,” said the LSRCA on the club, which encourages the idea of geocaching as a sport and family activity.

Additional awards were presented to King's Robert Meinschenk for the planting of more than 10,000 trees on his Oak Ridges Moraine Property, King's York Energy Centre, also for tree plantings in the thousands.

