

Nominations open for Citizen of the Year



By Brock Weir

Nominations are now rolling in to name Aurora's next Citizen of the Year.

The honour, which recognizes outstanding people in our community is awarded by the Mayor of Aurora each June during a Council meeting, selected by an independent panel from an extensive list of nominees submitted by the public. The deadline for nominations is Tuesday, April 30. Eligible candidates must be a Citizen of Aurora 16-years-of-age or older. Nominations can be made by an individual citizens, groups, or organizations with a detailed backgrounder of their nominee's activities within Aurora. Emphasis is made for individuals who have served the community in an all-round nature, rather than one specific area or individual initiative.

Incumbent Citizen of the Year Brian North still can't quite believe he was chosen as 2012's Citizen of the Year last spring. At the time, Mr. North was saluted for his past work with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, overall community involvement, and, in particular his work with youth, including volunteerism with the cubs and scouts, local sports teams, and with the York Region District School Board to assist students with Autism.

"Many Aurora organizations have profited from his volunteer largesse. He is active in the Aurora United Church, he's an avid fundraiser involved in both the A & B Courier Run for Southlake and the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay which was just last Friday night," said Mayor Geoffrey Dawe during the awards ceremony. "Through his business, he has provided service to a who's who of Aurora Organizations Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers Big Sisters of York Region, Neighbourhood Network, the Women's Centre of York Region and Community Living Newmarket-Aurora. Each of these groups has received assistance in some way from our Citizen of the Year."

At the time of the award, Mr. North said he was "completely shocked" by the honour and speaking to him last week in advance of this month's nomination process it is clear that despite emceeding many Town events over the last 12 months and even riding in the Canada Day and Santa Under the Stars Parades that it still hasn't quite sunk in yet.

"I am still in shock over that when I relieve that night, but getting involved with the Town and having the opportunity to emcee the Citizen Awards was quite exciting for me," he says. "It was nice to be acknowledged in that way. I am not normally one who likes to be acknowledged, but it did feel good, I have to admit. This is a great community to live in and be honoured with such a distinction in the community as great as ours is exciting. It is beyond words to say how exciting it is and how honoured I was."

Since he received his award, it could be said he has developed a keener eye in recognizing some of the people that may be able to follow in his footsteps this year, and many years down the road, and building on the many Citizens of the Year that came before

him, including Jo-anne Spitzer, Gordon Barnes, Susan Walmer, and David Tomlinson. He encourages people in the community to also take a closer look at the people around them who are making a difference and take that extra step to nominate them for Citizen of the Year.

?If you see someone who is putting their heart into it in any way, I would highly recommend it,? he said. ?You want to make them feel good about themselves and I would highly recommend residents nominate someone. I have seen a few I want to nominate, if you want to know the truth!?

Nomination forms for Aurora's next Citizen of the Year can be found online at www.aurora.ca/aurora/citizenoftheyear or by calling Betty De Bartolo, Mayor Dawe's Executive Assistant, at 905-726-4741.