

## Pickering College honours community changemakers at annual recognition event

Pickering College celebrated individuals and organizations creating meaningful impact in communities locally and globally during its recent fourth annual Changemakers Recognition Event.

The event recognized recipients of the 2026 Agents of Change Awards and the Alumni Keystone Award, honouring leaders whose work reflects compassion, service, innovation, and a commitment to creating positive change.

“Each of this year’s recipients reflects the values that guide our community and a deep sense of responsibility to others,” said Julia Hunt, Assistant Head of School, Strategic Initiatives. “We are proud to recognize their contributions and to bring together a network of individuals who are driving meaningful change.”

### **2026 Changemakers Recognition Honourees Individual Agent of Change Award Beverly Brookes-Izzard**

Beverly Brookes-Izzard was recognized for her leadership in social services and mental health advocacy, supporting vulnerable individuals and families on the margins. Through years of compassionate work grounded in integrity, resilience, and dignity, she has created meaningful change while strengthening the communities she serves.

### **Individual Agent of Change Award Dr. Tina Whitty**

Dr. Tina Whitty was honoured for her work delivering critical surgical care to underserved communities in Haiti and Guatemala through Team Broken Earth Barrie. An anesthesiologist and medical leader, Dr. Whitty was recognized for her mentorship, global health advocacy, and commitment to restoring dignity and hope through healthcare.

### **Community Agent of Change Award Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture**

The Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture was recognized for advancing equitable and sustainable food systems through education, innovation, and community engagement. Its work expands access to fresh food, revitalizes urban spaces, and helps build food literacy and resilience.

### **Community Agent of Change Award CNIB Canada**

CNIB Canada was honoured for breaking down barriers for people who are blind or partially sighted through advocacy, education, and innovative programs. As a valued Design SPARC partner, the organization also helps students deepen their understanding of accessibility and inclusive design.

**Youth Agent of Change Award Ava Dedier** Ava Dedier was recognized for founding a non-profit dedicated to elevating Black voices and lived experiences through art. Through exhibitions and public partnerships, she creates inclusive spaces that amplify emerging Black artists and foster meaningful community connection.

### **Youth Agent of Change Award Shawn Wu**

Shawn Wu was honoured for his dedicated volunteer service supporting seniors and veterans at his local Legion. Through compassion, respect, and genuine care, he has brought warmth, dignity, and connection to those he serves.

### **Alumni Keystone Award Maarika Farmer**

Maarika Farmer '12 received the Alumni Keystone Award for her leadership in sustainability and decarbonization efforts within Canada's infrastructure sector. As Sustainability Coordinator at Miller Paving, she supports emissions tracking, reporting, and

research into lower-carbon industry practices. Her international academic and professional experiences inform her collaborative approach to sustainability leadership.

Founded on Quaker values, Pickering College is committed to fostering leadership, service, and social responsibility. The Changemakers Recognition Event reflects that commitment by celebrating individuals and organizations contributing to a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world. The event was attended by community leaders, partners, students, families, and supporters, including Tom Vegh, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Newmarket, who joined the celebration to recognize the honourees' contributions to the community. The evening also highlighted Pickering College's Grade 12 Capstone finalists and student-led Impact Incubator projects, showcasing the depth and creativity of purpose-driven initiatives developed through the school's Global Leadership Program. Working alongside community partners, students engage in real-world learning experiences that challenge them to develop innovative solutions to meaningful social and environmental issues.