

Retired teacher continues to make valuable contribution to community



With his music prepared, David Pilkey brings a little bit of joy each week to community members enjoying a hot meal at Aurora United Church's Rise and Shine Breakfast.

Enhancing the much-appreciated fellowship at this community meal, he has been part of its fabric for more than 10 years. It's just one way in which the former teacher gives back to the community, and one of the many reasons for which the Town of Aurora recognized him with the 2021 Good Neighbour Award.

The Good Neighbour Award, part of the Town's Community Recognition Awards program, recognizes individuals who embody what it means to be a Good Neighbour and celebrates the simple acts of kindness and compassion that help create connected and vibrant neighbourhoods.

This year, we congratulate David Pilkey on receiving the Good Neighbour Award, said Mayor Tom Mrakas, presenting the award outside of The ABLE Network, an Aurora-based organization that provides life skills and job opportunities for young adults living with intellectual disabilities. This is where David, after retiring from the York Region District School Board, has been volunteering. He quickly realized the ABLE Network fully aligned with his own ambitions with regards to making a better neighbourhood for all.

David is an all-encompassing Good Neighbour and has been for decades. He is a compassionate, kind, generous person towards all of his neighbourhood. He has a wonderful gift for music, which he shares at Aurora United Church. David is an active member of the Church's choir and plays a significant role in their larger ensembles.

David has been generous in sharing this gift and his time with others. During the church's Out of the Cold breakfast on Saturday mornings, David's music was a highlight and became a staple during this program. Over 10 years ago, David stepped up to the piano to play and sing for this group and the rest is history. Since that moment, David has rarely missed the Breakfast and has ensured other local artists can share the spotlight, too. He always finds the time and energy to support his neighbours; young and old, long-time residents or new arrivals to the country, David is there to lend a helping hand to address each individual's unique set of challenges so they don't have to do it alone.

In accepting the Good Neighbour Award, Mr. Pilkey was humble and paid tribute to examples in his life.

I immediately think of the Good Samaritan and am thrilled to be associated with that circle. This award is really an extension of my exceptional two parents, Barb and Doug. When I think of their legacy, I think of love, and compassion, and service, so when I see people in distress or lonely, or just have a few worldly goods, I try my best to figure out how I can show them love and then

compassion, and ultimately be of service to their needs.

?My goal has always been to help everyone see the extravagant beauty of our world and sometimes we just have to offer a small and kind gesture towards one another and they, too, get a brief glimpse of its magnificence.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter