

## St. Max's Peta-Dragos is leader within the school, wider community



Dabria Peta-Dragos is driven to be a community-builder by her passion for helping others, whether it is within her school community within St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School or York Region as a whole.

The student's dedication was recognized by the Town of Aurora earlier this year as Peta-Dragos was presented the 2024 Youth Volunteer Award, part of the Town's annual Community Recognition Awards program.

The Award is presented each year to a young citizen for their volunteer efforts and who has made a significant contribution to the community by demonstrating their commitment to being a positive leader.

She has demonstrated remarkable dedication to community service, contributing nearly 350 volunteer hours over the past three years, said Mayor Tom Mrakas, who presented the award in Council Chambers. She supports organizations like the Aurora Community Arboretum, Neighbourhood Network, the Aurora Public Library, Toronto General Hospital, and Chartwell Retirement Home.

As co-chair of the Youth Engagement Committee, she organizes empowering youth events. In her role as president of the York Secondary Catholic Presidents' Council, Dabria advocated for students and initiates impactful projects such as Plant a Tree with Us, and Secret Santa Presents for Indigenous Children. Her organizational skills and commitment to enhancing youth experiences make her an exemplary youth leader. For Dabria, this award reaffirms that her actions are positive and demonstrates to other youth that their impact is important and valued.

This was a sentiment Peta-Dragos reiterated upon accepting the honour.

My journey in volunteerism is driven by my passion [for] helping others, she said. From teaching young children to swim, volunteering for seniors and in hospitals, for environmental sustainability and combatting climate anxiety, to serving as the co-president of the Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) and as the re-elected President of the York Secondary Catholic Presidents' Council, I have always aimed to empower and uplift those around me. This award serves as more than recognition to me; it symbolizes the collective spirit of our community and the impact that we can achieve together.

It is a testament that each youth [has] the power to spark significant change and voice impactful ideas. I would like to reassert my commitment to being a positive leader today and impacting and influencing those for a better tomorrow. I am grateful to the YEC, the selection committee, and Mayor Mrakas for honouring my dedication to Aurora, where together we can create a community that truly cares.

**By Brock Weir**