

## Tutoring and coaching lands local youth Volunteer Award



Age is not an indicator of the impact you might have on your community; it's more about how you use the time you've had so far.

Michael Chan is a youth who uses his time wisely and for the benefit of the greater community.

This past spring, Chan was recognized by the Town of Aurora with the Youth Volunteer Service Award, a component of the annual Community Recognition Awards program. The award is presented each year to a young citizen for their volunteer efforts, a young citizen who has made a significant contribution to the community by demonstrating their commitment to being a positive leader.

This most recent recipient has made many contributions to the community at his desk and in the water.

Michael has volunteered with a variety of organizations, including co-chairing Aurora's Youth Engagement Committee. In this role, he provided positive moral support to his peers and encouraged the committee to get engaged with the wider community, said Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Neighbourhood Network, who hosted the ceremony at Town Hall. Michael also contributed countless hours volunteering as a Special Ducks Aurora volunteer program as a swim coach, where he coached 25 swimmers with disabilities between the ages of five to 21.

During the pandemic, Michael recognized there was a need for safe community service hours for his peers and classmates. Through his hard work, he was able to create Peer Mentors Aurora, a youth-led tutoring organization that has provided over 350 hours of free tutoring. This program also provided other students with both academic support as well as support for their mental wellbeing on a weekly basis. On top of all of this, Michael is well-spoken, a natural leader, and a wonderful example of how we should all participate in giving back to our community.

Chan said he was really humbled when he first learned of the recognition as he was sure there are people who have spent more hours giving back.

For the past three years during the pandemic, I have been tutoring my brother and his friends, and went on to teach people who needed help learning at home, he said. There's a bunch of different subjects and I got a bunch of my friends [into] it as well. Over that process, I really got close with my brother. We turned learning into something that was more of a game, which was much more fun.

To see all these efforts recognized through this award is really gratifying. I felt really happy.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter