

## Van Hemerts recognized by Town with 2024 Older Adult Volunteer Award



Alex and Rin Van Hemert are happy to give back to the community they love because they feel they have, in turn, been 'blessed' by the community.

This is a driving philosophy behind the couple who were recognized by the Town earlier this year with the 2024 Older Adult Volunteer Award, part of the Town's Community Recognition Awards program.

The couple accepted the award this past spring in Council Chambers from Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland, following an introduction from Mayor Tom Mrakas, who said the award each year recognizes a citizen aged 55+ who, 'through their volunteer efforts, has made a significant contribution to the community and has demonstrated their commitment to being a positive leader today and in the future.'

'Alex and Rin have served Southlake Hospital for 25 years bringing comfort to patients and staff,' said Mayor Mrakas in his presentation. 'Additionally, both of them have volunteered at various organizations such as the York Regional Police Chorus, Salvation Army Northridge Community Church and much more. Their volunteering and commitment continue to have a positive impact on the community and they help wherever they see a need. Both are kind and lovely people and truly are a great asset to the Aurora community.'

In a video played before they accepted their award to much applause, Alex explained he and Rin give back.

'We volunteer because we have been blessed so much ourselves,' said Alex. 'We have benefited so much from this community, from the protecting of the Police Services, the facilities in our wonderful hospital, and we just want to give back to the community and we do thank God for every opportunity he gives us to help others. We have been blessed so much ourselves.'

'We thank God for the opportunity to be here and it is an honour, for sure, and I am sure many people deserve this honour as well. We just thank God that we have been chosen. I don't think we're more special than anyone else who volunteers. Everyone does a wonderful job, especially in the hospital.'

Fittingly, as Alex concluded his message, he added he was going straight from being in front of the camera, to rehearse with the Chorus!

**By Brock Weir**