

## York's Paramedic Chief honoured with King Charles III Coronation Medal



Jeremy Watts has shown extensive leadership in medical services for more than two decades, and his important work in the community was recently recognized with the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

The Chief of York Paramedic Services received the Federal honour by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy at a recent ceremony held at the York Paramedic Services' base in East Gwillimbury.

In presenting the medal, the MPP said the honour recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to the country, a province or territory, their region, and their community.

Over the course of more than 20 years, Chief Watts has demonstrated exceptional leadership in emergency medical services, ensuring that the community is safe and well cared for. His contributions have improved pre-hospital emergency care in York Region and beyond, and he has been a tireless advocate for both patient care and mental health support within Emergency Services, said MPP Gallagher Murphy.

Jeremy's dedication extends far beyond his professional responsibilities. Jeremy is a passionate advocate for mental health support, specifically for paramedics and initiatives aimed at preventing violence towards emergency responders. His volunteer efforts with Victim Services of York Region, St. John's Ambulance, and minor hockey, exemplify his commitment to enhancing community wellbeing and safety.

This medal honours not just his individual achievements but also the collective effort of his team here at York Region Paramedic Services. So, to the entire team here, the entire paramedic team, thank you for your service and your dedication to the community.

Watts agreed the medal didn't belong just to him - it was indeed recognition for the entire team.

With heartfelt gratitude, I stand before you today to receive this prestigious honour. As the Acting Chief of Paramedic Services, I am deeply humbled to be recognized for contributions made to our beloved country. This medal is not just a personal accolade, it is a testimony to the dedication, resilience and unwavering commitment of all paramedics who serve the community.

York Region Paramedic Service is the best in the country and it is my colleagues in this room and out on the streets protecting our community who make it so, and I will stand by that forever. In addition to my role with York Region Paramedic Services, I am also honoured to be recognized for my volunteer work with Victim Services of York Region and St. John Ambulance. Victim Services plays a crucial role in providing support and assistance to those who have been victimized by crime and experience trauma and crisis. St. John Ambulance is another incredible organization that supports the health and well-being of the community through the teaching of life-saving skills.

Thanking his family and his colleagues for their support, he concluded: "In preparing to accept this medal, I really took the time to reflect on the strength and the uniqueness of my community and identity. As we continue to face challenges from south of the border and beyond, it is our values, our unity, our commitment to inclusivity and compassion that define us. Our identity is built on the principles of respect, diversity and community. It is these principles that guide us in our service and in our daily lives that make me a very proud Canadian."

**By Brock Weir**