



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Citizen of Character – Elementary

Aaron Ang

Richmond Hill

As a member of the Luke 4:18 Social Justice Committee, Aaron has been instrumental fundraising for St. Vincent de Paul's food, coat, and Christmas drives. Aaron initiates spirit committee activities and he exceeded the spirit assembly when the school reached its fundraising goal. Aaron gives of his time and volunteers whenever possible.

Christian Raposo

Richmond Hill

Christian has a keen awareness of the needs of his peers and his teachers and acts to accommodate those needs instinctively and efficiently. As long as Christian is in the classroom, there are no concerns about students feeling excluded. The integrity, honesty and fairness inherent in his day-to-day interactions demonstrate maturity that is far beyond his years.

Emiliano Laing

Richmond Hill

Emiliano is a leader in every sense. He has initiated our student's government activities and he is instrumental in celebrating the monthly virtue winners. He shows initiative and responsibility by being an ambassador for parent engagement evenings, curriculum night, student assemblies and liturgies. Students in all grades look up to him as he consistently models positive behaviour and respect towards others.

Ivanna Trentadue

Richmond Hill

Ivanna demonstrates inclusiveness and responsibility by being the deputy prime minister on student council and a member of the Luke 4:18 Social Justice Committee, Spirit Committee, and Faith Committee. Ivanna always demonstrates compassion, fairness and respect when she leads all the students in participating in student-led social justice initiatives.

James Robinson Public School Breakfast Snack Program Volunteers

Markham

JRPS Breakfast Snack Program Volunteers provide food for 400 students, 5 days a week. Volunteers have learned the importance of nutrition, safe food handling procedures, food pairing, food presentation and portion control. Volunteers work as a team to accomplish daily tasks within a limited amount of time and show compassion to make sure that each student is ready to learn without feeling hungry.

Jennifer Raita-Smith

Richmond Hill

Jennifer is regularly identified by those who get to know her as a child of character. This is evident from her years of volunteer efforts and taking action on issues from underprivileged children to environmental improvement for everyone. Jennifer is forever giving of herself when she sees someone else in need.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Lauren Bryson

Richmond Hill

Lauren is the Prime Minister of Student Council. She is also a member of the Spirit committee, the Faith committee and the Luke 4:18 Social Justice Committee. She has volunteered her time to lead the student body in virtue assemblies, caroling, and fundraising events. Lauren demonstrates initiative, compassion and optimism when she interacts with students, staff and parents alike.

Mya Cheung

Markham

Mya and the students in the Milk Bag Club at All Saints Catholic Elementary School need to be recognized because of their concern for the poor. In this endeavour milk bags are transformed into sleeping mats for the homeless in Toronto as well as for people all over the world who are in need. The students' egos are not all about themselves but about the plight of others in need.

Nazanin Soghrati

Richmond Hill

Despite immigrating to Canada only 3 years ago, Nazanin has been persistent and motivated enough to learn English quickly, and now speaks, writes and reads the language with confidence. She has won several prizes for her story-writing, which only adds to her determined and resolute mindset. She's a source of empathy and kindness in the school with her regular smile.

Yonatan Eben-Ezra

Vaughan

Yonatan is always looking for ways to help the students get involved beyond the walls of our school. She has been an active organizer and fundraiser for many different charities and humbly leads by example. Yonatan is the kind of student that motivates others to be their best self and she has the confidence and drive to truly make a positive change.

Citizen of Character – Secondary

Adrian Ally

Vaughan

Adrian is a student who gets involved with community whenever he can. He created his own Disney Mascot business where he has several characters and he performs for many community events. It is important to recognize the passion and commitment Adrian has for his business and such a positive and caring attitude to do what he can to help others.

Aidan Aird

Markham

In 2015, Aidan was awarded the Eduzine Global ACE Young Achiever Award and this year he was awarded the Three Dot Dash Global Teen Leaders Award, which he will be receiving in New York City. Aidan has worked non-stop trying to make a positive difference in his community and exemplifies all of the qualities that you look for in a person with great character.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Charandeep Gill

Vaughan

Charandeep is a hard worker who tries to have the most fun possible. She is one of the four students at Woodbridge College that work with guidance counsellors, the vice principal, as well as other teachers to find ways to empower students to make a difference in each other's lives by being more inclusive and by being more active characters within their school.

Diviya Leonard

Markham

Diviya is deserving of recognition for her unique dedication to social justice issues, and her work to raise awareness among her peers. Diviya's efforts have included both charitable campaigns and the use of social media to help others find their spark and become active community leaders.

Emily Williamson

Aurora

Emily consistently demonstrates good character on a daily basis, despite the fact that she has gone through so many personal difficulties in life. Emily was born with Bilateral Fibular Hemimelia, resulting in missing the fibula bone in her right leg. Despite this, she always has a positive attitude and her willingness to help others is so beautiful.

Jathusha Mahenthirarajan

Richmond Hill

Jathusha believes in the spirit of taking initiative to create compassionate, empowering and inclusive environments for everyone. Jathusha has volunteered over 2,000 hours serving local and international communities. Her passion for social justice, innovative skills and a positive mindset has set her apart as someone who believes in youth to create positive changes in her community.

Jiayu Wu

Markham

Jiayu is a talented student-leader of outstanding character who personifies all-round excellence. She consistently exemplifies impactful traits, such as inclusiveness and optimism, as she strives to optimize personal and community development. A reflective, respectful and responsible individual, Jiayu is a role model who truly lifts as she climbs.

Kalea Kirsh

Newmarket

Kalea is an unsung hero and shows compassion and capability beyond her years. Since 6 years old, Kalea has received a junior achieving certificate and always demonstrated leadership to marginalized peers. Kalea has lovingly babysat a motherless child for 2-1/2 years, and has recently been chosen for the elite school program at Shad.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Luke Achkar

Aurora

CJ has brought a great deal of awareness and optimism to the St. Max community. In the face of adversity, CJ has been able to teach others about respecting one another and embracing our differences. CJ does this in a variety of ways including involvement in dramatic and visual arts, athletics, and the equality council.

Shafique Wilson

Markham

Shafique is a positive role model and a fine representative of Stephen Lewis Secondary School, his community and Soccer Canada. Shafique has worked diligently to achieve his academic, athletic and personal goals. Shafique's high academic standing, dedication, very caring nature and his leadership skills make him worthy of receiving recognition for his efforts.

Citizen of Character - Young Adult

Andrew Santos

Markham

Andrew is an individual who puts others before himself. He has an innate ability to mobilize youth to respect themselves and to help others. Andrew freely gives of his time and talents to others and his passion and compassion have strengthened and bonded our community. Andrew is an important asset to our community and very worthy of this recognition.

Auxiliary Constable Brian Chan Badge #9438

Vaughan

Brian faced circumstances that would test the character and resiliency of people many years his senior. He has moved closer to his future goals by recently joining the ranks of the York Regional Police Auxiliary Unit. Brian is a young man of exemplary character, strength and resolve. He is determined to do what is right, what is good and what is required.

Carla Whillier

Newmarket

Carla has dedicated her professional and personal life to helping her community. Her extensive volunteer work supports people with serious illnesses live in a more inclusive environment. Carla is a hidden hero and continues to prove she is an exceptional human being. She is the type of person who fulfills her commitments no matter what it takes.

Crystal Pangman

Georgina

Crystal is proudly creating the Georgina Ambassador Program (GAP) to acknowledge the admirable qualities and contributions that Georgina Youth routinely make to their communities. She wants GAP's concept to be a program that all communities utilize to honour their youth. Crystal not only helps existing charities but also recognizes different needs and creates events and programs to help support those needs and improve lives.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Farah Saeed

Richmond Hill

Farah strives to improve the lives of those around her through her volunteer contributions. Farah has an all-round good character, which she uses to make a difference in the lives of many families, individuals, businesses and neighbourhoods by strengthening community relationships. She tries her best to create an environment where everyone feels included and supported.

Haelee Jones

Markham

Haelee is an honest, hard working, trust worthy individual who cares about what she does and the people she is doing it for. She always takes initiative to get things done and goes above and beyond to make sure that what she is working on is done to perfection. Haelee takes pride in what she does and is a great team leader – a definite person you would want on your team.

Karina Kroytor

Vaughan

Karina has volunteered with The Peer Project | Youth Assisting Youth since 2013, playing the critical role of volunteer youth mentor. Karina has dedicated more than 400 hours to the role of youth mentor, and her compassion, perseverance and courage have all contributed to the positive, life-changing impact that she has had on others.

Louis Chow

Markham

Louis has been volunteering at Across U-hub since 2008 and has been serving the youth community at large. Louis believes that any small effort that he contributes in the community can bring positive impact to others and his passion lies in providing support for the next generation of youth.

Mamta Prajapati

Richmond Hill

Mamta is a volunteer spearheading free weekly support programs for teenagers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Richmond Hill through Autism Teenage Partnership. She is using her experience in behavioural science to ensure that teenagers with ASD have a safe environment to discover themselves and improve social skills.

Melissa Fairey

Aurora

Melissa embodies the values of a global citizen. She has worked internationally in Georgia, Chile and Indonesia in community development initiatives that are sustainable, inclusive and compassionate in nature. Her volunteer and work history has been a testimony to her belief in making a positive impact on the world while making a living.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Citizen of Character – Adult

Aida Batten

Newmarket

Aida is one of those volunteers who just keeps on giving. She balances her volunteer time by working with palliative clients, allowing them to be themselves; she is compassionate, respectful and inclusive, welcoming any one to join in. Aida shares in her clients' laughter and in their tears, but she is able to show them how their courage and optimism goes on to help others.

Angela DiBernardo

Markham

Angela is a hardworking, generous and genuinely great individual. She exhibits the characters of integrity, initiative and perseverance. She helps everyone at every turn. Staff and students are thankful for the many things she does, the big things and the small things. She embodies beauty and goodness and she is a pleasure to work with – every task is completed with a smile.

Angela Villani

King

Angela is a hardworking dedicated individual who makes every effort to help others. She does whatever is necessary to help staff and students. Angela treats others in a fair and just manner and she does everything with a smile and with heartfelt warmth. She strives to be the best she can be in all situations.

Annalinda Nolasco-Torres

Markham

Annalinda is an excellent representation of the attributes of the Character Community, as well as demonstrating a humble Canadian attitude in her citizenship. Her service, well beyond the expectations and scope of her job assignment, encompasses the student, staff, and parent community at Mother Teresa C.E.S.

Bruce Janes

East Gwillimbury

Bruce is an incredible man who thoughtlessly donates his time to many causes that he holds close. Since 1978, Bruce became a paramedic and shortly after a volunteer firefighter with the Mount Albert Fire Department. In addition to being on call 24/7 as both a volunteer firefighter and paramedic, Mr. Janes still finds time to volunteer with Scouts Canada.

Donna Gerrits

Aurora

As a successful business woman in York Region, Donna finds the time to get involved. She assumes whatever role is necessary to take the objectives of the group over the top. Donna shares her opinions openly and once the group sets their direction, she is a team player working to achieve the goals of the group. Her positive attitude motivates others which always results in a successful result!



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Pastor Doug Neufeld

Georgina

Through rain or shine, snow or sleet, Pastor Doug can be depended on to provide support, counsel, comfort, wisdom, inspiration and resources through life's happiest and saddest times. For more than 20 years, Pastor Doug and his wonderful wife Pastor Jeannie are a blessing to our communities and extraordinary role models to all ages!

Gary and Gina Semeniuk

Georgina

Gary and Gina are exemplary representatives of the York Region Eco Team at Keller Williams. They both are extremely active in the community and have started and sponsored initiatives that benefit the entire town. Their community is important to them as a place they live, but also they are contributing to the potential of the community by leading by example.

Heather Graves

Richmond Hill

Heather is a person of enormous integrity. For many years, she has run our Breakfast Club in our school, four days a week, while also maintaining a full time job. We are so grateful for her dedication and leadership in our school. Because of her efforts, our whole school benefits. Thank you just doesn't seem enough!

Kathy Proudfoot

East Gwillimbury

Kathy embraces community and is inclusive and respectful of York's diverse population. As a cancer survivor, she shows perseverance and optimism in her role as a peer support volunteer, assisting other community members that have had a cancer diagnosis. She works with both the Cancer Society and Southlake's Regional Cancer Centre and has made a tremendous impact in improving the lives of others.

Kendra Pozner

Vaughan

Kendra's volunteering at Anne Frank Public School includes reading with students, raising money for our school, organizing our Health Room and other administrative support. Kendra's commitment and compassion to the school makes her an invaluable asset to students and staff.

Maria Kostopoulos

Markham

Maria always demonstrates optimism when she tackles special events at the school like our annual fundraiser. She plays a critical role in supporting and spending the day during the fundraiser making sure every student is included. Maria has proven herself to be a responsible leadership who can adapt to changing circumstances and still gets the activity done.

Mary Martin

Newmarket

Mary is more than just a tireless, hands-on volunteer – it has been her mission to connect life-changing organizations to the people who can make a difference. Mary has headed our Santa Fund for eight years, which has helped more than 1,000 families. Mary has also been involved with the Canadian Cancer Society, captaining our Relay for Life teams.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Michael Delaney

Markham

Mike is the embodiment of character. As part of the Markville Secondary School Custodial Staff, Mike always shows care for staff and students by consistently lending a helping hand. Mike never fails to provide a genuine greeting and warm smile. There is nothing that Mike can't fix and no person who can't rely on Mike for a helping hand.

Michael Norton

East Gwillimbury

Michael is the most generous, kind and humorous person in Newmarket and Mount Albert! Almost every single day with rare exception, Michael is helping an individual or organization. No request for assistance seems to be too daunting. Michael is terrific at engaging others to give to their community by setting the platinum standard.

Najmussaher Momin

Markham

Najmussaher is a legal professional the entire community adores and receives services from. Without her, the community would not be the same. She is honest reliable and works hard in local initiatives by advocating for issues she believes are important. Najmussaher is deeply passionate and is devoted to create awareness of social justice in the community.

Norma Trivino

Richmond Hill

For the past 23 years, Norma has served as a dedicated volunteer at work, at church, and in her community. At work, she volunteered countless hours to raise funds for United Way through the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign. Throughout 14 annual campaigns, she wore diverse hats including Chair, Co-Chair, Committee Member, Special Events Coordinator, and Ambassador Coordinator.

Nunzio Lacobellis

King

Nunzio's dedication, initiative and integrity support the students, teachers and staff at KCSS in a variety of ways. Through his outstanding character, Nunzio models to others exceptional service and the caretaking staff follow his lead. As a result, our school facilities and community are stronger, safer, and a better place to work and learn.

Teresa Lombardo

Markham

Teresa has exemplified Christian values throughout her career in Catholic Education. In the last five plus years of her career, Teresa assisted at the 10:15 Satellite Mass held in the San Lorenzo Ruiz Catholic School's gym. She arrived early on Sundays mornings, and helped prepare for mass and also served as an Eucharistic Minister. Teresa personifies Faith in Action.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Captain Thomas Doyle

Markham

Captain Doyle is a strong example of a Character in the Community through his volunteer efforts with the City of Markham, Markham Veterans Association, Royal Canadian Cadet Program and the Markham Royals. He sets the example for the youth and young adults through his integrity, optimism, and initiative. Captain Doyle has displayed all characteristics of what character in the community should resemble. No caps required on 3 words above

Una Wright

Newmarket

Una is the founder of YouthSpeak, a selfless organization that creates a safe place for youth to ask for help on personal challenges such as bullying, eating disorders, drug abuse and mental health issues. YouthSpeak and its youth speakers have provided inspirational stories to over 130,000 students, teachers, police and parents while demonstrating many of the character attributes such as compassion, courage, inclusiveness, optimism, and perseverance.

Citizen of Character – Senior

Beth Greenblatt

Aurora

Beth has volunteered with palliative care at Southlake Regional Health Centre for four years. Beth demonstrates character in action every time she arrives at Southlake. Her compassion and respect for palliative patients is exemplary and her integrity in dealing with both patients and families is remarkable.

Betty Holder

Newmarket

Betty has been a dedicated volunteer with Doane House Hospice for the past 7 years. Betty has a wealth of knowledge from her life as a retired nurse and is always willing to brainstorm situations to be able to find resources in the community. Betty is full of life and brings a smile into any situation.

Dinie Vanderwerf

East Gwillimbury

Dinie is part of a team of very special Palliative Care Volunteers whose compassion and kindness towards others is making a huge difference in the lives of many patients and their families. Dinie demonstrates courage, compassion, optimism and has been relentless in her commitment to helping patients and their families for nearly 30 years.

Jim Nesbitt

Newmarket

A long-time resident of Newmarket, Jim was one of the founders of the Newmarket Food Pantry. In his 87th year, Jim serves on the Pantry's Board of Directors and also volunteers for the garbage detail and the pick-up of weekly food donations. Jim epitomizes Character in Action through all his volunteer activities.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Lee Prioriello

Vaughan

Founder and President of Youth Bocce Canada, Lee continues to be an advocate and friend to individuals with special needs. Over the last 15 years, Lee has organized a bocce banquet at Eagle's Nest Golf Club in Maple for the sponsors, volunteers and participants. York Region is a better place because of his initiative, love, compassion and respect for others.

Marianne DiMonte, Anne Merriam, Dobrila Stasovski, Irene Hunter, Irene Libby, Ron Hoinkes, Sabina Duchno

Aurora

Marianne, Anne, Dobrila, Irene, Ron and Sabina deserve to be applauded for their kindness, generosity and strength. During this past holiday season, together they donated 2 carloads of toys and gifts and 1500 pounds of food. Every single one of them were dressed up delivering bags full of donations.

Marjorie Brewster

Newmarket

Marjorie is a compassionate senior who brings a smile to children at Newmarket's Southlake Health Sciences Pediatric Oncology Clinic as a volunteer. She gives away toys that she often pays for out of her own pocket to children undergoing cancer treatment and makes a difference to those around her.

Pasquele Ciaralli

Richmond Hill

Pasquele's ability to overcome adversity is an example to all. His experiences taught him respect, harmony and inclusiveness especially with our multicultural town. He is honest and fair in life, takes responsibilities seriously and is well respected in the various venues he frequents. A man with integrity, a quick smile and at almost 90 years young, is still a character.

Sam Andreacchi

Newmarket

Sam is the definition of character. He goes above and beyond to create a safe, clean and inclusive school. He has developed positive relationships with many of our students - several of them who look to him for guidance and support. Sam is 'Mr. Mulock' and through his modelling of the character attributes he encourages and instills in others to do the same.

School of Character – York Region District School Board

Aldergrove Public School

Markham

From the minute you walk on to school property and into the school, you can feel the attributes of Character being lived out in all aspects of the school. Kevin Merkley with his team has done an outstanding job of taking the time to build relationships with students, staff and community to create citizens that are literate, compassionate, innovative, dynamic, and confident global citizens. Caps are not required.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Peace Club - Huron Heights Secondary School

Newmarket

This group demonstrates compassion, fairness, respect, and a desire to help others. This diverse and selfless group give of their time to help those who are less fortunate, and remain optimistic that, through acts of kindness and empathy, they can make a difference in their community.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School

Markham caps not required on 2 words below

The staff and teachers at Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School are caring and always available to listen and act when needed by students and parents to heal hurts and be sensitive to their feelings. Staff continually encourage students to stand up for their beliefs and principles and help deliver workshops on resilience and how to face challenges, fear and difficulty with fortitude.

Resiliency Project - Alexander Mackenzie HS, Huron Heights SS, Markham DSS and Keswick HS

Richmond Hill, Newmarket, Markham and Keswick

By their participation in the Resiliency Project, Alexander Mackenzie, Huron Heights, Markham District and Keswick High have demonstrated a whole school approach to supporting positive mental health through intentional work on optimism, mindful awareness, growth mindset, self-regulation, and self-advocacy resiliency. This has been a successful multi-sectoral work with students, staff, parents and community partners.

See Different, Think Different - Stouffville District Secondary School

Whitchurch-Stouffville

The students of Think Different, See Different are leading by example. They have explored the impact of privilege and power, and how those forces create challenges and opportunities in their school as our population continues to become increasingly diverse. The students have taken the initiative to design activities to address concerns their peers have, as identified in our school climate survey.

Thornhill Secondary School

Thornhill

At Thornhill S.S., 'Character' is truly 'in Action'. The school intentionally cultivates a caring, inclusive community, by ensuring grade 9s' smooth transition, supporting and celebrating the booming ELL population, and prioritizing mental health and well-being. It is amazing to witness the incredible, collaborative and uniquely student-driven efforts that make this happen!

School of Character – York Catholic District School Board

All Saints Catholic Elementary School

Markham

All Saints is an engaged community with strong core values. The school is a pillar of the community and its members have demonstrated themselves to be people of character. Many within the community are thankful for the varied initiatives which the school supports, and as a result, individuals and families find themselves in a more comfortable position as citizens of York Region.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

St. Jean de Brebeuf Catholic High School

Vaughan

St. Jean de Brebeuf C.H.S. is an exemplary school that lives out its motto to “Educate the Mind and Nurture the Soul” in both its curricular and co-curricular programming. It is a school of character especially because it creates a place of belonging for all staff, students and parents.

St. Justin Martyr Catholic Elementary School

Markham

St Justin Martyr Catholic Elementary School works together with the parish and school community to recognize and value the importance of Catholic Virtues in educating and inspiring students to reach their full potential in a safe and caring environment.

St. Patrick Catholic School

Markham

St. Patrick is a community that lives the Character Attributes on a daily basis. For years, the school has supported individuals and families in need through food drives, winter clothing drives, and the sponsorship of children in other countries through World Vision. The school is active in recognizing the value of all members of the community and responding to their needs with perseverance, responsibility, and integrity.

School of Character - Alternative Educational Institution

Aurora Preparatory Academy

Aurora

Aurora Preparatory Academy provides a solid foundation for elementary students by instilling the very qualities espoused by the York Region Character Community. APA respects students as individuals, and responds by teaching them to be and do their best at all times, helping them become valuable, contributing members of society.

Norval-Morrissette Secondary School

Richmond Hill

Norval-Morrissette is a school that is unique in every sense of the word. In spite of its small size and the challenge of promoting francophone values in a culturally diverse community, it is worthy of recognition due to its perseverance, passion and dedication to humanitarian causes.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Educator of Character

Angel Hayes

Vaughan

Angel is truly a person of exceptional character who exudes the qualities of compassion, inclusiveness and respect. Because of Angel, all who enter the doors of St. David have a sense of belonging and an understanding that their voice will be heard. She cares deeply for all students, staff and community members in her care. And above all, Angel values the importance of relationships.

Antonella Pellegrino

Markham

The Luke 4:18 group is an active group at St. Patrick Catholic School who demonstrate the importance of responsible and compassionate citizenship. Their work inspires our whole school community to become involved in making our community a better place for all. Their efforts are only possible because of the inspired leadership of Antonella Pellegrino.

Cindy Forde

King

Cindy is a compassionate educator who strives to ensure the well-being of both staff and students at King City SS. Her choices every day demonstrate that she has character in action and her integrity, perseverance and inclusiveness allows others within our school community to feel valued and supported as individuals.

Cristina Zuccaro

Vaughan

Cristina brings enthusiasm and dedication to every committee she has been a part of, her interaction with students and staff members and her compassion for those around her. She always displays leadership, dependability, and initiative in every task she undertakes. Cristina is a "can't miss" educator that truly exhibits the character of York Region.

Dan Pedersen

King

Dan is a long time member of the King City SS staff. His leadership in the Guidance department and throughout the school demonstrates character in action on a daily basis. Through his leadership he reminds us of the purpose for decisions that are made and consistently supports staff to reflect upon the choices to ensure that expectations and guidelines are applied in a fair and consistent manner.

Debra Conrad-Knight

Richmond Hill

Debra was an exemplary model of resilience, optimism, empathy and kindness in the midst of a very difficult year for the staff. The school Resiliency Team, with Debra's leadership, created their own Resiliency manuals for staff and students, created a Building Resilient Communities video to support the learning of all in the community, and did all of this while going through the sudden passing of a beloved teacher.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Fern Grenon

Whitchurch-Stouffville

Fern is beyond inspirational and has a wonderful rapport with her students, teachers and parents alike. Fern always takes the time to find out exactly what each student needs. She consistently devotes her free time helping students. The definition for this award should be Fern Grenon.

Flora Pupo

Vaughan

Flora truly exemplifies initiative and innovation in the classroom. Flora was able to take her love of technology and her passion for education and merge the two creating an opportunity for students to become technologically skilled and literate and thus better prepared for modern workplaces.

Jacque Cushing-Dill

Markham

The vision of Luke 4:18 is embodied in the person of Jacque Cushing-Dill. She is radically inclusive in her attitude, her demeanor, her actions, and her commitment to young people. Jacque has demonstrated the courage to grow with the Luke 4:18 Committee as it moved from a school initiative to a Board-wide program including 100 schools and thousands of students.

Jeewan Chanicka

York Region

Jeewan has worked in 5 schools across the region as a teacher and principal and has engaged in system-wide work to support students and communities. He is an individual with exceptional integrity and his purpose in life is to transform the world one life at a time. He is committed to finding ways to empower our children by creating an equitable and inclusive environment.

Jeff Masterson

King

When you meet Jeff, you will immediately notice his passion and optimism for life, for young people and for teaching itself. Jeff demonstrates positive character traits in his daily interactions with all community members, students, parents, co-workers and community partners. A role model to peers and students alike, his enthusiasm, sense of humor and can-do attitude contributes in a positive way to supporting a caring and safe learning and working environment.

Jennifer Dakin Spagnolo

Vaughan

As an educator, Jennifer inspires and motivates students to have high expectations and to reach the impossible. Her students value her passion for healthy active living. Her friends and colleagues value her dedication and leadership to her profession. Her skating athletes value her compassion and optimism as a coach.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Joel Chiutsi

Vaughan

Joel is an outstanding role model and mentor to the teaching staff. He is a supportive presence to parents. He is gentle, kind, visible and an exemplary support to all students. In all his interactions, staff, student and parents feel supported respected and achieve success. He is the Shepherd that goes looking for the lost sheep.

Josie Fragnelli

Vaughan

Josie collaborates with parents, students, and community agencies to ensure the best possible learning opportunities and experiences are included for students with special needs. Her optimism, courage and willingness to break down barriers and liaise between parents, school staff, and community agencies in order to ensure that programs are in place for exceptional learners is commendable.

Julie Morris

King

Julie is an invaluable member of the King City Secondary School teaching staff. Her compassion, inclusiveness, and responsibility are the cornerstones of her work with all students in the school community, which ranges from student leaders to those at-risk. She meets students where they are and supports them in moving forward to greater things, whether it is in their personal leadership ability, literacy skills, or academic outcomes.

Kelly Sartor

Markham

As a teacher of an ASD Community Class, Kelly demonstrates respect to her students. Kelly optimistically approaches each day and learning experience for and with her students, and believes that all her students can and will be successful. The integrity she displays in building an inclusive classroom community is admirable, and helps to create a wider inclusive school feeling.

Keshia Ferrari

Thornhill

Keshia has been a French teacher at German Mills Public School for four years and has instilled a passion for French culture and a love for languages in all students that she has had the opportunity to teach. Keshia has been involved in several initiatives to promote and applaud good character and to empower students to use their voices to inspire others and make change.

Lisa Mitchell

Whitchurch-Stouffville

Lisa has been a dedicated teacher at Whitchurch Highlands Public School for the past 2 years. Aside from her regular duties teaching the grade 4 class, she is also our school's music teacher. She runs various bands (jazz band, rock band, recorder club) and works hard to demonstrate inclusiveness and encourages all students to try new things.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Lisa Rawding

Newmarket

Lisa Rawding exemplifies strong character attributes in all her daily interactions with staff and students. She models morality and authenticity in all she does. She gives of herself unstintingly, working long hours, and always giving her full attention to the person in front of her – demonstrating selflessness and the highest degree of personal integrity.

Michelle Johnson

Richmond Hill

Michelle has demonstrated initiative by single-handedly creating a vision for and organizing a Character and Kindness campaign that has been infectious throughout all our staff, students, and community. Michelle passionately believes in equipping children with a Growth Mindset in order to support them to persevere and reach their goals.

Monique Griffin

Markham

Monique is very active in the community, as she not only strives to reach every student in her grade 7 classroom, but she has also taken the initiative to teach at her church, as well as additional continuing education courses on the weekend. Monique is a reminder that the world can offer beautiful learning opportunities, once individuals come together in unity and perseverance.

Sue Thompson

Newmarket

Sue has a quiet, but highly effective way of supporting all students through both her classroom teaching and her community involvement. She is a very empathetic person and motivates students to be the best they can be both academically and personally. Sue models these traits for her students and encourages others to follow her lead in making Newmarket High School a place of character.

Vivienne Searles

Whitchurch-Stouffville

Vivienne embodies character, starting with Respect. As Ralph Emerson says "The secret of education lies in respecting the student." Vivienne is a constant advocate, collaborator and optimist, meeting challenges optimistically and with humour. Her countless hours, her sweat and tears and relentless commitment to our children is amazing.

William Schoenhardt

King

Bill is a terrifically enthusiastic, dedicated, ambitious teacher. He supervises the Student Council, coaches the Nordic Ski team, teaches Outdoor Education and is the key Organizing Teacher for the annual Grade 9 Orientation week. He is so supportive with the students, encouraging them to push themselves to their personal best. A man of high character, his optimism, initiative, and responsibility lead others to do more for the school community.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Character Through the Arts

Diane Huang - Creativity Through Arts

Markham

Creativity Through Arts is a youth arts organization founded in 2014. Based in the GTA, the philosophy of the organization embodies youth initiative and motivation, and the group works towards developing an environment for all artistic youths. Whether it be cooking or be at boxing, the organization tries to include every form of creativity so that youths can be involved in the arts in one way or another.

Ian Proudfoot

East Gwillimbury

Ian Proudfoot demonstrates “Character in Action” and serves as an excellent role model. As a founding member of the York Region Arts Council and Newmarket Celebrates the Arts Gala, he has made significant contributions to the Region. He is an insightful, thoughtful leader who has clearly changed the fabric and future of our community. Ian is greatly admired for his vision, compassion and selfless contributions to our community.

James Miller and Heather Stevens

Newmarket

James is to be commended for the remarkable success of Voices for Africa, and the donations generated in our community that have supported the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Along with his educational partner, Heather Stevens, James has persevered with this wonderful event, and has given birth to rising stars throughout northern York Region with their first performances on a professional stage.

Jordana Lieberman

Vaughan

Jordana is a professional artist who has volunteered her services at Anne Frank Public School. Her projects are inclusive and welcoming. Many students and parents have praised Jordana's work as creating a sense of belonging and community. Her commitment continues with an exciting new project at our school.

Karen Cowderoy - The Love Project

Georgina

The Love Project is a local organization that exemplifies Character in Action and encourages local youth to develop these attributes through art and community. Specifically they reach out to at risk youth and pair them with a mentor; providing them with opportunities to find their voice through artistic mediums. Through the program the youth really exemplify compassion, courage and perseverance.

Kindred Spirits Orchestra

Markham

The Kindred Spirits Orchestra is committed to changing lives through music's extraordinary power to communicate, inspire, and entertain. Based in Markham, this group is dedicated to enriching the cultural life of the Greater Markham, Richmond Hill, and Unionville communities. Through outstanding live performances that are evocative and passionate, the organization seeks to elate avid patrons and develop new audiences of all ages for classical music.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Merlene Samuel–Cephas (1962-2015)

Newmarket

Merlene, director and founder of Arts Spotlight Theatre School, was a mainstay in the local arts community for the past 30 years. Merlene's devotion to teaching the arts to young people has proven her theory that the arts can truly change a person for good. Her recent passing has left a legacy that youth can have a voice and create change in their lives and for the betterment of their communities through exposure to the arts.

Rita Giancola

Vaughan

Rita has worked in the York Catholic District School Board for her entire career. She is a woman of courage, inclusivity, initiative, optimism, and perseverance. She smiles at all times and brings happiness to each person she meets. She is a fantastic candidate for this award.

Rosemarie De Cesare

Vaughan

Rosemarie displays wonderful attributes that make her an ideal character in action as she shows compassion through her everyday life. She is very sensitive to other people's feelings and she would like her art to help heal others. Rosemarie is not only very creative but also very compassionate towards others with emotional struggles, especially those with mental health issues.

Character Through Sports

Georgina Minor Baseball Association

Georgina

GMBA teaches its players lifelong attributes and more! Through baseball, GMBA teaches its players fairness, accountability, equal opportunity, self-control, perseverance, discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, and friendly competition. GMBA helps instill valuable attributes in its players that they also utilize in all other areas of their lives, throughout their entire lives.

Kenneth Perry

Newmarket

For many years Ken has dedicated his extra time to offer extracurricular activities at St. Nicholas school. He coaches multiple sports and even heads up the robotic club, giving up many lunch hours to allow the students to enjoy learning how to work with robots. Through his efforts, he is able to make the learning environment of St. Nicholas a much richer experience for all.

Matthew Dettman

Georgina

In everything Matthew does, he shows his players the true meaning of sportsmanship and camaraderie. Matthew created practice plans that ensured every player was developing their hockey skills and he demonstrated that all players were equal showing fairness and inclusiveness to all. He teaches his players about optimism while building their confidence, self-esteem and respect for themselves and one another.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Business Person of Character

Amy Moskalyk

Georgina

When Amy is not running a successful business, professionally styling clients hair, she's busy helping others! Amy's energy, contagious enthusiasm, creative ideas, unstoppable motivation and compassionate heart fuels her endless potential to benefit all. Amy takes the initiative when many won't, she includes everyone, she's got courage to spare, and she shines a light and compassion to help heal others' troubles.

Bob Goodlad

Georgina

Bob's business ethic is above reproach and he is truly a role model. He contributes to charitable efforts and he also started a local Pay It Forward Social Media Initiative. Each month, members of the community nominate people they feel most deserved to be recognized and Bob gives them a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Dean Smalley

Newmarket

Dean loves Newmarket. This is clear in all that he does for his community. As a business owner of A & B Courier and a community leader, he exemplifies his motto: It's our responsibility to give back to the community because it's the community that has helped to make us who we are. Dean's honest and optimistic approach has others wanting to work with him to support those matters close to him.

Jeysabel Pearson-MacKinnon

Georgina

At Cakes By Jez, Jeysabel is a creative genius with endless talent to create amazing memorable sweet treats for all ages and occasions. When she's not baking up an incredible storm, Jeysabel is playing an active role in our community. Whether it be hosting a bake sale to raise money and awareness for a cause or donating to events, she loves to get involved!

Kathy Foch

Georgina

Kathy has been a realtor in Georgina since 1991. In that time, she has worked hard to become a top producer, while giving back to the community through a variety of charity and business events. Kathy's accomplishments and community support are endless, as is her amazing heart! Kathy is a pillar in our communities, respected, trusted and appreciated!

Meng Simone Si

Richmond Hill

Simone is an incredible human being. Simone works for Blue Hills and makes a difference in the lives of others. I have never seen a more dedicated worker. Simone is compassionate, honest, ethical and fair. She allows clients to contact her even when she is no longer their worker. For every client her integrity, commitment and compassion is unequal.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

R.J. Gorman

Georgina

R.J. owns and runs the Gem Movie Theatre in the Town of Georgina. With his family business, R.J. constantly gives back to the community through charity events that help Georgina youth and residents achieve their full potential. Gorman's selflessness and compassion truly makes a difference and make him a most worthy nominee.

Organization of Character – Profit

Bob Vaughan

Georgina

Through his volunteer work, Bob realized that there was a real shortage of assistance for families with disabilities in managing their financial affairs. Bob recognized this need and began offering a comprehensive financial education series to families for free. Bob and his associates have helped 1,000 families relieve the burden of financial strain for those dealing with such a difficult situation.

Cheryl and Todd Telford

Georgina

With years of sponsoring, donating and supporting to various community events, Todd and Cheryl make the McDonald's golden arches into an endless golden heart due to their dedicated community generosity. They're extremely proud to employ students from Georgina and reward an annual scholarship to one of their graduating employees attending college or university. No caps required

Doug Jones

Georgina

For decades, Doug has been dedicated to providing the community with all of its equipment needs. Doug is always there for customers, as well as his community, with Pauline Fulhan and his amazing staff. Doug and his Georgina Rentall provides much more than incredible equipment, it provides community support and cherished memories that may not be possible without his giving heart!

Glenn Dickson

Georgina

Community involvement is more than what Glenn does at the Sutton Giant Tiger Store – it is who he is. Glenn is an integral member of the community, sharing community concerns and serving community needs year-round. Glenn goes above & beyond!

Hamid Hemmati

Georgina

For over two and half decades, Keswick Quick Pizza serves our communities more than just great pizza; they serve community support in every way. They're committed to being an integral part of the community by supporting various local charitable groups, activities and families. They're committed to continually building respectful, positive relationships and enhancing the quality of life in our communities.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Spacesaver Solutions

Newmarket

Spacesaver Solutions Inc. contributed to the Neighbourhood Network 2015 Holiday Gift Drive. Their office donated \$350 in cash and gift cards and approximately \$500 in gift donations. Their entire office deserves to be recognized for their selfless act and commitment to helping the community. Their donations went to families that otherwise wouldn't have had a Christmas.

Trevor Comeau

Georgina

Trevor believes deeply in being a role model and leader in our community. His optimism about how great our town can be is infectious and he takes great pride and responsibility in improving our town. This year, Trevor hosted initiatives that contributed financially to the Georgina Food Pantry and the Animal Shelter, but most importantly, he has raised community awareness and interest in these types of community support organizations.

Organization of Character – Not For Profit or Service Organization

Autism Teenage Partnership

Richmond Hill

Autism Teenage Partnership (ATP) is a youth-led non-profit organization serving York Region dedicated to supporting teenagers with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families through accessible, free, and peer-to-peer model of weekly social programs. ATP allows its participants to fulfill their potential in a non-academic and non-pressure environment and their programming helps teenagers to cultivate friendship and positive social skills that enhance their qualities of life.

JVS Toronto

Vaughan

For decades, JVS Toronto has helped thousands of individuals throughout York Region to make their education and employment goals a reality. JVS programming includes specialized programs for Newcomers to Canada, youth involved with the law, assessments for children within the school boards and general employment assistance for both youth and adults. JVS utilizes the Character attributes to walk the talk and assist individuals from all backgrounds and experiences.

New Leaf Living and Learning Together Inc.

East Gwillimbury

Since 1984, New Leaf Living and Learning Together Inc. has been providing services and supports that offer a rural option to meet the growing need for community-based services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and complex needs. They respect that each Individual is unique and is treated with respect and dignity, encouraging and supporting them to recognize their own potential.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

The Business Women's Network of York Region

East Gwillimbury

The Business Women's Network embraces all Character Community attributes in the way they operate. They supply a service that is not readily available for people in our society where most small business owners struggle on their own. The mission and philosophy focus is on working together for mutual success and growing both professionally as well as personally.

Change our World – Environmental

Angela Kesthely

Vaughan

Angela is the founder of Milk Bags Unlimited, a nonprofit charity that promotes the use of milk bags in creating sleeping mats for the homeless in neighbouring areas and numerous developing countries. She has inspired a large network of volunteers who train students and adults in schools, probation offices, churches, clubs and work places across southern Ontario.

Brent Kopperson

Aurora

Brent is the founder and Executive Director of Windfall Ecology Centre, a non-profit social enterprise dedicated to building sustainable communities. Brent is driven by a desire to empower local communities and have more efficient and sustainable mechanisms to produce and use energy. Brent has been successful in bringing green energy to communities, and creating dialogue between multiple stakeholders, including governments, communities, investors, and advocacy groups.

Deb Aloï

Vaughan

Debbie is a woman of action. Debbie worked for the York Catholic District School Board her entire life - in five different high schools. She excels in her career by helping others, helping the environment, and helping others help the environment. All Character attributes are found in Debbie in abundance!

Green Inc. - EcoTeam - Milliken Mills High School

Markham

Green Inc. is comprised of students from Milliken Mills High School and it is their 7th year as a certified Ontario EcoSchool. Through their actions, they are environmental ambassadors and are making effective changes in their local community and the world.

Hubail Ajward, Ph.D.

Richmond Hill

Dr. Hubail Ajward is an environmental engineer and scientist who has played a vital role for environmental protection. He has an ongoing commitment to the positive development of youth and their families. Hubail is an exemplary friend, mentor, educator and leader. He has worked tirelessly to educate, motivate and move our school to one that prides itself on ECO GOLD status.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Noelle Mikkelsen

Newmarket

Noelle has spear-headed our school's environmental committee and has creatively designed environmental changes to the physical space in our fields and playground. Noelle is always reflecting on how to make the environment in our school more environmentally friendly as well as addressing the needs of the students. She also engages the students in discussions about the environment and listens to their voice as next steps are planned for the environmental team.

St. Justin Martyr Enviro Club

Markham

The Enviro Club at St. Justin Martyr is a true testament of initiative, respect, perseverance and integrity at work. They recently received Platinum status after celebrating five years of Gold recognition from the Ontario Eco Schools Program. St. Justin Martyr's Enviro Club continues to strive for effective environmental changes that will lead to a better community for everyone.

Change our World – Community

Constable Antonio Cedrone Badge #1306

Aurora

Constable Antonio Cedrone is committed to making a positive impact on our citizens and, in particular, our youth. Since joining Community Services, Constable Cedrone has continuously demonstrated his passion for assisting and mentoring youth of all ages. Constable Cedrone will humbly say that he takes away much more from the experience than he gives and enjoys interacting with the youth and community partners.

Azizul Mohammed

Richmond Hill

Azizul is a highly self-motivated and compassionate individual. Azizul has an ongoing commitment to the positive development of youth and their families. Aziz is a real leader who demonstrates that community services are his first priority. He has an unwavering commitment to make a difference in the lives of others and he is both inspiring and remarkable.

Christine Stewart

East Gwillimbury

Christine has a way of inspiring people to help others. From something as small as making sure someone has a ride to a program, to educating service groups on how they can work together to better the community. Christine shows compassion to community members and ensures they get the services they need by empowering others to help.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Danielle Koren

Newmarket

Danielle clearly demonstrates several of the Character attributes but especially Compassion, Respect and Inclusiveness. She has a passion for her community and brightening the lives of those less fortunate. She is the founder of Help-Portrait Newmarket which brings together photographers and hair and makeup artists for free professional photo shoots for the less fortunate in the community.

Danielle Murray

Newmarket

Danielle is the vice-president of the Catholic School Council for St. Nicholas school. Danielle organizes many community building/parental engagement activities such as the Halloween Dance A Thon, the School picnic and assists with the hot food lunch program. Danielle selflessly offers her time to make St. Nicholas a school community that is welcoming, accommodating and inclusive.

Eastern Gate Community

Whitchurch-Stouffville

Often we hear seniors are forgotten, are old and hold little value. Not at Eastern Gate Community! The seniors are active and run activities that involve everyone. All residents are welcome and valued for their contribution. There is an inclusiveness among residents and respect and consideration regardless of age, mind set or ability.

Emily Curcuruto

Georgina

Emily is a Lifestyle Consultant at Cedarvale Lodge. Emily displayed incredible initiative and perseverance in creating the CyberSeniors program for her residents, helping to introduce the wonders of the internet to folks between the ages of 75 to 97. Emily's program is now being offered in some form in over 35 of their other Senior Homes across Ontario and BC, inspired by her pilot program at Cedarvale Lodge.

Jehan Chaudhry

Georgina

Jehan embodies the attributes of a community leader and has significantly improved the way women and children impacted by violence in York region receive support. Her tireless leadership, inspiration and vision on issues of social justice and equity are fundamental to enhancing services in York Region. Furthermore, the change she has inspired has grown beyond the region to other municipalities and regions across the province.

Constable Jennifer Meacham Badge #1674

Newmarket

PC Meacham has dedicated a great deal of her time building relationships with youth, schools, organizations and the community, which has allowed her to provide an exceptional level of service in relation to volunteering and policing communities. Through her perseverance and commitment to the community, she has truly made a difference and epitomizes the meaning of 'Character in Action'.



2016 Character Awards Nominees

Marj Andre

Richmond Hill

Marj is one of those unique individuals at the heart of our community. She is the Town of Richmond Hill's biggest booster and community builder, continually demonstrating every Character Community attribute. Marj devotes countless volunteer hours to her popular Connecting the Community event that attracts dozens of community leaders, businesses, not-for-profits and charities each week who meet, network and build a stronger community.

Michelle Cassidy

Newmarket

Many individuals in York Region have likely had the privilege of crossing paths with Michelle Cassidy, the YRDSB Mental Health Lead. Her courage to stand up for mental health in the face of stigma; compassionate commitment to this responsibility; ability to generate lasting impact; and her warm, dynamic, and supportive nature, are just a fraction of why Michelle Cassidy, our YRDSB Mental Health Lead, is so genuinely deserving of recognition.

Micole Rubinoff

Whitchurch-Stouffville

Micole Rubinoff is a community leader both in autism advocacy and the lifesaving society. Through her selflessness and dedication, she has made a difference across Ontario for parents and caregivers alike in the area of drowning prevention. Micole is an instigator and an innovator and has been involved in primary research for a lifeguard intervention database.

Tom Mrakas

Aurora

In his role as a Town Councillor, Tom is demonstrating that he wants to make Aurora a better place - not simply by telling others how to do it better, but by involving residents through his openness and transparency. Tom takes responsibility for all his actions and demonstrates leadership through his role on committees and by his actions in following up to tackle the bigger issues to a conclusion.