



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Citizens of Character – Elementary**

#### **Adam Carter, Holland Landing - Grade 8**

Adam is a respectful, responsible and hardworking student at Holland Landing P.S. He is well liked by peers and staff for his positive attitude and compassion, and he takes the initiative in any given situation.

#### **Andrew Easterling, Aurora - Grade 6**

Andrew has been a wonderful influence in class, demonstrating perseverance, goal setting and improvement in all areas. He is involved in sports, and is also interested in the valiant Canadian effort made by others such as those of "War Child Canada."

#### **Daniel Sarro, Richmond Hill - Grade 6**

Daniel attends O.M. Mackillop PS and regularly demonstrates the Character attributes being recognized by his peers and staff at the school, and within his community.

#### **Elise Vestergaard, Mount Albert - Grade 5**

Elise plays hockey for the Aurora Panthers Atom AA team and was asked by her Coach to acknowledge someone who has had a significant impact on her. Elise chose Duncan, a boy with special needs from her own Mount Albert PS who has taught her that when she falls down, to get back up and keep going.

#### **Francis Livara, Markham – Grade 8**

Francis is a student at St Francis Xavier who demonstrates responsibility, respect and compassion in all her interactions. She is a member of the school leadership team and the Social Justice group. Projects that she initiates have had a meaningful impact on the school as well as the community.

#### **Ian Chan, Richmond Hill – Grade 8**

Ian demonstrates outstanding character and encompasses each attribute to the fullest. People gravitate towards him; they recognize that he is genuine and true in all his actions. Crosby Heights PS is proud to have someone who "walks the walk and talks the talk."



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Imagine: Project Peace Student Group, Unionville - Grade 5/6**

Imagine: Project Peace is a student led group at Unionville PS consisting of students in Grade 5 and Grade 6. Students work together to promote peace and inclusiveness throughout the school. Their mission is to change the school climate and bring a positive outlook to all situations.

### **Lily Edmunds, Newmarket – Grade 6**

Lily has participated in over 14 local 5K runs and raised over \$600 between July and December 2013. When she isn't racing her heart out for those in need, she is a contributor to the National Post in the Each Coach section dishing out advice to runners who ask.

### **Sabina Friese, Sutton – Grade 5**

Sabina is a student at Black River PS and is making a difference in her community. She volunteers at school; donated her birthday gifts to charity; and is growing her hair for "Angel Hair for Kids". As a member of the "Me to We" club, Sabina embraces their goal of "shifting the world from me to we".

### **Sabrina Saullo, Woodbridge – Grade 8**

Sabrina consistently demonstrates outstanding character at St Andrew ES. She has shown compassion and dedication to all students with special needs in an effort to build a community where everyone feels included, empowered and valued for his or her unique contributions.

### **William Edmunds, Newmarket – Grade 2**

William is one amazing 7 year old boy at Notre Dame CES. When he isn't supporting his sister Lily's fundraising, he's at school making sure all of his friends get along and play fair. He includes all children in their playtime, and stands up to those who try and exclude others.

## **Citizens of Character - Secondary**

### **Aidan Aird, Markham – Grade 9**

Aidan has received an award at St Brother Andre School for every one of the character traits, many of them multiple times. Outside of school he collects food for the food bank, toys for the York Region Women's Shelter, and most recently used sports gear for kids that can't afford it.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Arun Jeyaganeshan, Markham – Grade 12**

Arun is responsible, selfless, a student of excellent character, an outstanding role model and a tremendous representative of the student body at Milliken Mills H.S. He maintains a positive attitude and has the respect of staff and students.

### **Bianca Pisciola, Markham – Grade 12**

Bianca has made a huge impact on the community since she started the non-profit organization, One Silver Lining. OSL is aimed to promote positive body and nurture healthy self-esteem. Coupled with fundraising events and elementary school workshops, One Silver Lining is making a positive mark within both Unionville HS and the broader community.

### **Brennan Wong, Richmond Hill – Grade 11**

Brennan has completed over 2,600 volunteer hours serving local and international communities; and raised over \$75,000 to help young people, seniors, families and the disadvantaged. He believes in the potential of young people to become leaders of tomorrow, and hopes to inspire others to support their communities.

### **Harry Gao, Thornhill – Grade 12**

Harry is a citizen of outstanding character who personifies all-round excellence as he endeavors to maximize his potential, the potential of others and our general society. He consistently demonstrates respect, responsibility, optimism and initiative.

### **Isabel Eisen, Thornhill – Grade 12**

Isabel generously volunteers her time as a Peer Helper for students who need academic remediation. She also runs the After School Math club and participates in the Best Buddies Program. Isabel is an individual with great integrity, who treats everyone with respect and sincerity, regardless of their ability.

### **Jacqueline Avedian, Vaughan – Grade 10**

Jacqueline exemplifies the Character Attributes through St Elizabeth's School peer ministry, as an altar server, reader's ministry, and assists youth groups of both St. David's and St. Andre Bessette. She also dedicates every Saturday working with Autistic Children at Maple Community Centre.

### **Kalainithan Kalaichelvan, Kimmie Ho, Arleen Maldia, Michael Redshaw, Grace Pan, Markham - Grade 12**

For the past two years, this team of students have worked collaboratively together to promote school spirit, student and staff wellness and school improvement through their creative use of media and video production.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Lydia Brama, Mount Albert – Grade 9**

While in grade 8, Lydia and members of her class developed a 5K walk/run-a-thon to raise awareness and funding for the Because I Am A Girl Foundation. The event was known as the Bramarama five-kilo-metre walk/run at Fairy Lake in Newmarket.

### **Maseh Hadaf, Richmond Hill – Grade 12**

Maseh Hadaf is an outstanding and sincere school leader at Richmond Hill HS who captures the attention and respect of students and staff. He demonstrates and models the Character attributes on a daily basis and dedicates endless hours to his school and has been instrumental in creating a positive school climate.

### **Omer Farooq, Markham – Grade 12**

Omer is compassionate, optimistic and responsible. He is always checking on staff and students at Milliken Mills to make sure that they are doing well and pushes his peers to work hard to achieve their full potential. Omer has a positive outlook and is always smiling.

## **Citizens of Character - Young Adult**

### **Anthony Vani, Kleinburg**

Anthony has provided remarkable service to the Kleinburg and Vaughan community. His efforts in co-founding the first Omega Leo Club to his dedicated involvement at the York Regional Police Rovers are just some of the ways Anthony has made and will continue to make significant community improvements.

### **Jacky Lau, Markham**

Jacky demonstrates character in action through his relentless effort in youth development at Across U Hub in Markham, walking alongside young people in immigrant families and overseas students. In the words of many youth, Jacky is truly an optimistic, initiative and inclusive mentor.

### **Julia Buttiglieri, Woodbridge**

Julia has been volunteering in an elementary school two days a week while attending university full-time. She is dedicated, responsible, respectful, has strong work ethics, and a very positive attitude. She demonstrates leadership and initiative and motivates others in a positive and effective manner.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Matthew Morrison, Markham**

Matthew volunteers at Wilclay Public School and consistently demonstrates many character traits, particularly responsibility, perseverance and initiative. The children treat him with respect and he is a great example of a person that makes a big impact on the community.

### **Shawn Avery, Georgina**

Shawn participates in YouthSpeak Performance and shares his personal story of overcoming bullying and living with Asperger's. He volunteers at several organizations related to youth groups, shelters and residential centres to share his experiences and challenges while encouraging others to share and overcome theirs.

## **Citizens of Character - Adult**

### **Adele Baur, Holland Landing**

Adele is a selfless individual who can always be counted on to lend a helping hand or lead a project to its success. Her passion for her community is evident through her countless volunteer hours supporting her children's school and with IODE Holland Landing who support local families in need.

### **Andrea Edgar, Markham**

Andrea Edgar is a parent in our school who makes a tremendous impact on the entire school community through her leadership and demonstration of compassion, inclusivity and responsibility. She works tirelessly as a School Assistant, volunteer and member of School Council to improve the lives of all of the school's stakeholders.

### **Deborah Murray, Newmarket**

Deborah is an example of what it means to be a person with dedication and to truly care for others. She has been a nurse for over 20 years at Bloorview hospital for children caring for their every need and taking the time to make them smile. She is a never-ending resource of care and love.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Doreen Kolkman, Newmarket**

Doreen is compassionate and kind and has a gift for listening quietly and empathically to difficult stories of grief and loss. A volunteer at Doane House Hospice, she helps to facilitate Caregiver and Bereavement Groups and makes new clients feel welcome and fully supported. She thinks creatively and has a sense of humour which is infectious.

### **Elizabeth Leung, Markham**

Elizabeth is a committed volunteer with the YRDSB for over twelve years. Elizabeth supports in the school library, comes to school events, provides translation support and knows nearly every child in our school by name. Elizabeth is also actively involved in the local community and supports a variety of Markham initiatives and events.

### **Hans Uhr, Newmarket**

Hans volunteers countless hours, putting 150% effort into every cause he helps. He has a big heart, puts the needs of others before himself, and strives to build a feeling of community among people. He never expects any recognition for his contributions, and always has a smile on his face.

### **Constable James Needler - Badge #523, Aurora**

Constable James Needler actions clearly demonstrate his compassion, courage, honesty and integrity as he teaches children of all ages the importance to be true to oneself and do the right thing. As a police officer he demonstrates courage, teaches respect and shows compassion. In his spare time, he coaches hockey.

### **Lucy Mazzonna, Thornhill**

Mrs. Mazzonna is a parent at the Holy Family Catholic School and demonstrates the attributes of initiative and responsibility of being treasurer for the council, taking photographs at school events and producing a yearbook as well as being a part of numerous fundraisers and the hot lunch program.

### **Maria Romano, Thornhill**

Mrs. Romano is a parent volunteer at Holy Family CES who demonstrates perseverance and responsibility through her diligent work at the school. She helps with the hot lunch program and supervises on the after school pickup program.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Michelle Clayton-Wood, Newmarket**

Michelle is a well-respected member of the Newmarket community, engaged in the everyday fabric of many of the residents' lives. She brings her sunny disposition and energy to every task whether it is being a volunteer or helping with a community event. Michelle 'gives back' every day!

### **Sandy Michaud, Newmarket**

Sandy has made a career of volunteering in the community and Doane House Hospice is honoured to have her as a volunteer. You may recognize her name; she is one of the volunteers with the Canadian Olympic Committee, supporting our athletes in Sochi in their Olympic home away from home!

## **Citizens of Character – Senior**

### **Edward Bader, Thornhill**

Ed Bader is a man who believes in the power of family. At 83, he continues to work tirelessly to strengthen families in York Region through his parenting programs that reach out to marginalized groups such as single parents, grandparents and newcomers.

### **Geraldine Baird, Aurora**

Gerry has been a Special Events Volunteer with the York Regional Police Volunteer Program since 2008. She is committed to making a difference in her community. Her keen business mind and wealth of experience in the private sector lends to support her efficiency and effectiveness in her role as a volunteer.

### **John Rogers, Keswick**

John has served as Mayor of Georgina for two terms. He served as President of the York Region Law Association, Chair of the York Region District Health Council, York Region Abuse Program, and Chair of the United Way of York Region, Diversity and Inclusivity Advisory Group and Director of the Central LHIN.

### **June Scandiffio, Georgina**

June is an active member of both the Women's Group and Catholic Women's League at the Our Lady of the Lake church. She also assists in coordinating food for visiting priests as well as food for bereavement. She does all this with compassion, dedication and integrity – and with a smile!



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Kunal and Chitra Shah, Markham**

The Shaha are such a 'dynamic duo' of Character whose cheerful outlook is infectious to all who encounter them. They selflessly volunteer their time and expertise to their family, their grandchildren's school and to their community. Their contributions richly benefit people of all ages and reflect inclusiveness, initiative and optimism.

### **Margaret McCleary, Thornhill**

Margaret has one of the biggest hearts and shares her generosity with youth, adults and seniors alike. Since retiring as a Children's Aid caseworker for over 29 years, she uses her passion to help others through gardening and vegetable plot initiatives, food bank support and school bag assembly programs.

### **Pauline Stanbury, Stouffville**

Pauline has been the coordinator of the Mount Albert United Church food pantry for over six years. She takes her role of coordinator seriously: managing volunteers, filling shelves with donations, shopping for needed items, and personally dealing with the clients who make use of the service.

### **Una Walshe, Newmarket**

Una's relationship with Doane House Hospice began 15 years ago. As a retired teacher and community volunteer, she has dedicated her time to the Hospice clients making sure they're comfortable and doing "whatever they are happy doing".

## **School of Character - York Region District School Board**

### **Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, Aurora**

Dr. G.W. Williams's Secondary students have rallied to support a young six year old girl battling acute myeloid leukemia. The students have hosted a fundraiser event and several initiatives in support of Sarah Watkins and her family.

### **James Robinson Public School, Markham**

It truly takes a staff of committed, dedicated and empathetic individuals to form a team of excellence and strong character. It is a small school with a BIG heart with unbelievable energy and passion. JRPS embraces exceptionalities and works together to create a welcoming, safe and engaging learning environment for all.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Keswick High School, Keswick**

Keswick High School's ongoing in-school Student Blood Donor clinics demonstrate the students' commitment to compassion, courage, initiative, and perseverance. Over 900 units of blood, and more than 400 "1st Time" Donors, continue to save the lives of numerous Canadians.

### **O. M. MacKillop Public School Staff and Students, Richmond Hill**

The compassion that O.M. MacKillop P.S. staff instill in their students by creating a caring environment has yielded a school community that seeks to learn about, reach out and care for the greater community. The students have become global citizens who truly care for the world around them.

### **Thornhill Secondary School, Thornhill**

Thornhill Secondary School is an outstanding family where inclusiveness, compassion and respect are paramount in supporting the well-being and achievement of the diverse student population. The Transitions Program reaches out strategically to incoming students and their families - developing positive connections, enthusiasm for the school and care for the community.

## **School of Character - York Catholic School District Board**

### **Blessed Trinity Catholic Elementary School, Maple**

Blessed Trinity CES makes a concerted effort in supporting members of their local community through numerous food drives and the Adopt-a-family initiative at Christmas. Students support each other through the Bullying Prevention Pledge, Peer Mediation and restorative practices. The Eco team and Healthy Schools Committee concentrate on healthy living attitudes.

### **Jean Vanier Catholic High School, Richmond Hill**

Jean Vanier Catholic High School's anti-bullying program is based on inclusive sensitivity programs supporting the L'Arche Community. Expanded by the Red-Cross, "Beyond the Hurt" Youth Facilitation to be applied to other schools as a template, staffed by grass-root anti-bullying award winning students supporting the popularity of Human Rights and kindness.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Elementary School, Sharon**

The school is the backbone of the community. It is a school of character and character building, creating a culture of inclusion, respect, persistence and innovation. The school brings hope, serves well and celebrates the virtues of the Catholic Faith in all its initiatives.

### **St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School, Stouffville**

St. Brendan CES opened in 2012. Since then, the school's population has grown to over 600 students and has quickly enveloped a strong sense of community, student lead initiatives and inclusivity.

### **St. Cecilia Catholic Elementary School, Maple**

At St. Cecilia Catholic Elementary School, character education is experienced in many school activities, special events, and everyday experiences. Rooted in Catholic teachings, St. Cecilia is a safe and caring school that fosters students to become well-rounded citizens who have opportunities to grow spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially.

## **Educator**

### **Amy Evans, Richmond Hill**

Created "The Journey to Excellence - Years 1, 2 and 3" which was published along with teachers' guides and materials to teach social and emotional wellness in the daily classroom curriculum. The 7 Life Skills consist of Uniqueness, Intuition, Reflecting, Goal-setting, Visualizing, Mentors and Community Service.

### **Andrew Murchie, Markham**

Andy Murchie is compassionate, optimistic and demonstrates a high degree of integrity. He will do all that is necessary to support students' achievement and well-being. Andy has a positive outlook, always seeing the potential in all of our students, especially those who are in at-risk situations.

### **Angela Dornai, Markham**

Angie is being nominated to recognize the incredible effort that she has invested in supporting students at-risk in her role as with the York Region District School Board. Through a unique program that she launched at Middlefield C.I. she has managed to assist marginalized youth to become re-engaged with school.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Benjamin Bacola, Stouffville**

Ben teaches an autism class at Stouffville District SS. On an outdoor fall field trip, with other grade nine classes, we sat at a picnic table about 50 yards from a busy enclosed food tent. One of his students did not like his lunch. Ben immediately got up and quickly walked to the tent to see if he could find his student an alternative he would enjoy.

### **Cecil Roach, Markham**

Cecil Roach has been an outstanding educator for over 30 years. His current portfolio, as Superintendent of Inclusivity and Community Services in the York Region District School Board, speaks not only his expertise but also to his passion; inclusivity and community. Cecil is well known for his exemplary advocacy work in the many communities that comprise York Region.

### **Christopher Williams, Markham**

Chris Williams' commitment to the success of students in at-risk situations has an important impact on not only the students' lives, but also on the lives of their families and the Milliken Mills' community. Chris' understanding of adolescent behavior and motivation allows him to provide ongoing support and guidance leading to success.

### **Chrystal Erwin, Unionville**

Chrystal is involved in many initiatives at our school, Luke 4:18 Social Justice Group, being the biggest one. At Christmas, she organized a silent auction for Christmas trees, with the proceeds going to Free the Children. She also planned a Cook-a-thon, jointly creating meals for the Good Shepherd Refuge in downtown Toronto.

### **Clayton La Touche, Richmond Hill**

Clayton' friendly personality and caring nature combined with his keen ability to listen attentively to others has resulted in fostering a strong, collaborative and supportive relationship with each of the schools that he supports in York Region in his role as Superintendent of Schools.

### **Domenica Ferri-Violante, East Gwillimbury**

Mrs. Ferri-Violante is principal of the Good Shepherd Catholic School located in East Gwillimbury. As a principal she leads the staff and students with the expectation that Good Shepherd is a compassionate and inclusive school.

### **Donna Nicol, East Gwillimbury**



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

Donna Nicol consistently demonstrates inclusiveness, integrity and respect in her classroom. She works hard to make every child feel special and respected. The activities and initiatives Donna uses in her classroom help each child to gain confidence, self-respect and respectful friendships.

### **Erminia Nardi, East Gwillimbury**

Ms. Nardi is the grade 2-3 teacher at Good Shepherd Catholic School. She teaches my son Ethan who has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Through Ms. Nardi's compassion, inclusiveness and perseverance Ethan once again has a positive outlook of school and is making huge academic and social gains.

### **Helen Hart, Unionville**

Ms. Hart has been the Principal of Unionville Public School and is an exemplary role model for students, parents, staff and the community. Ms. Hart has created a caring and safe environment where everyone feels a part of the "family". She knows all 372 students by name and greets them with a smile every day.

### **James Cosentino, Aurora**

James is a true asset to education and to the students that he educates with his innate ability to exemplify "True Character" each and every day. His modality of teaching is unique in its own right – "a character" of sorts with his "voices" and "theatrical classroom performances" captivates students while enlightening and educating them on the subjects of history and literature.

### **Jeff Masterson, King City**

Jeff Masterson is both an exemplary teacher as well as a caring, compassionate and honest human being who demonstrates his ongoing commitment to each of the Character Attributes on a daily basis. He continuously promotes the critical importance of Healthy and Active Living in all of his students.

### **Jennifer Gillespie, Newmarket**

Jennifer's work with Girls Inc. to create the Northern Diva Ball; an inclusive event for all Grade 8 girls in Georgina to choose from hundreds of donated graduation dresses while learning about transition to high school, safe dating, etc., is another example of her positive respectful, and solution focused manner, making the day truly a community celebration for the girls.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Karen Geoffrey, Newmarket**

Karen is an amazing educator who has made a difference in the lives of so many youth. Not only is she kind, caring, and encouraging, she is an educator who goes the extra mile for students without hesitation. Karen is always there for children in need, and she does not stop until their needs are met.

### **Kate Devine, Markham**

Kate is relentless in her work as a Special Education Resource Teacher, fostering inclusivity and social justice, both at Stonebridge Public School and reaching out into the community. Her compassion and enthusiasm inspires students and staff to take leadership roles and become involved to make an effective difference.

### **Kathleen Rodgers, Terry Romanelli, Suzanne Jovic, Maple**

Kathleen, Terry and Suzanne are amazing teachers who mentor a large group of students in leadership and altruistic opportunities. This club promotes using student voice to make the world a better place and identifies ways to give back and bolster student self-confidence. They have encouraged and supported students in leadership roles as they educate themselves and others on local, national and global issues.

### **Kathryn Clark, Markham**

Kathryn is passionate about creating the best learning environment for all. She empowers others by welcoming them into many extra-curricular activities that she is part of. Kathryn has integrated career awareness into classrooms through writing of curriculum, development of workshops and the arranging of trips for different schools.

### **Kim Cresswell, East Gwillimbury**

Kim changed our lives! My son has Autism and after a terribly unsuccessful JK year, my son shined like the star that he is, because of Kim! Not only was she patient, tolerant and understanding, she also taught the whole class about these wonderful attributes.

### **Laila Semaan, Newmarket**

Laila is a wonderful person to work with and the students love being in her class.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Linda D'Eon, Thornhill**

Linda truly cares about each one of her students striving to make them good citizens. She not only educates them academically but also has an essential and positive impact in her students' lives in order to make them citizens of the world.

### **Lynne Chabot, Thornhill**

Lynne is a principal of character as she strives to keep her staff working for the students benefits at all times. She is always engaged in the social, charity and academic activities conducted by the school. She is caring and always willing to talk to students as well as parents regarding whichever questions they might have.

### **Maria West, Mount Albert**

Maria is one of the hardest working, professional, and compassionate people I have ever had the pleasure to work with. She makes our classroom inviting, safe, and enjoyable to be part of. She works hard to make sure that our classroom community is one that fosters respect, inclusivity, and compassion on a daily basis.

### **Mary Ann Holman, Stouffville**

Through leading activities inside and outside of her classroom and by sharing her personal experience, Mary Ann exemplifies and nurtures the character attributes we celebrate in York Region. She values students as individuals, celebrating their virtues, and empowering them to impact their community and the world through their words and actions.

### **Maureen MacLeod, East Gwillimbury**

Mrs. MacLeod is the kindergarten teacher for my daughter Siena. Mrs. MacLeod has created a positive environment where the children are being taught to respect themselves and others.

### **Melanie Parke, East Gwillimbury**

Melanie is a Grade 1/2 teacher at Good Shepherd Catholic Elementary School. She is a very sincere person who dedicates each and every day to educate our youth.

### **Melinda Garel, Keswick**

Melinda Garel is an outstanding, compassionate, optimistic teacher who is constantly putting others needs before herself. Melinda spends her days teaching students how to play fair and honest, and to include all members of the class both in the gym and outside on the playground.

### **Melissa Doucette, East Gwillimbury**



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

Melissa specifically demonstrates Perseverance with her students. She kept my daughter Shaelyn focused on achieving her goals in Core and because of this we have seen Shaelyn's grades take an incline - she supported Shaelyn during this time which truly made the difference!

### **Mike Freeman, East Gwillimbury**

Mike works hard to make students and parents feel included in the development of the student's highest achievements. He takes on new projects with integrity, optimism and perseverance. He is the Healthy Eating Program coordinator and has introduced students to healthy eating lifestyles.

### **Monique Justo, East Gwillimbury**

Monique has worked with my son Ethan for the past 4 years. Ethan has Autism Spectrum Disorder. Mrs. Justo shows such persistence while working with Ethan, always ensuring that he feels included and empowered.

### **Ralph Nunno, Markham**

Mr. Nunno has been a teacher since 1981 and has spent the last twenty-five years at Blessed John XXIII School. He has taught a variety of grades and has been involved in a number of school clubs, sports teams, extra-curricular activities and inter-school activities.

### **Rashmi Swarup, Markham**

Rashmi is an educator of outstanding character. As a Supervisory Officer of 19 schools, 41 administrators and approximately 14,000 students, Rashmi models positive character attributes. Whether students, families, teachers or administrators, she is always kind, respectful, inclusive, patient and compassionate. She is an inspiration and role-model for her principals!

### **Rebecca Lapp, Unionville**

Rebecca played a key role in the creation of the Best Buddies Prom held each June for students in community classes who are 'graduating' from high school. Invitations are sent to all YRDSB high schools. This celebration gives these students the opportunity to have an experience they would otherwise not be able to enjoy.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Robert Fedrigoni, Thornhill**

Robert is a teacher who cares for his students and others; he is fair, professional, inspirational, gives all he has for his students and a kind man who likes to see kids make a difference for the world. He likes to challenge kids so they can become the best they can be.

### **Sara Gordon, Thornhill**

Sara's Grade 4/5 class organized a fundraiser for all students in the school to participate to collect funds for the victims of the hurricane in the Philippines.

### **Sarah Kolar, Markham**

Sarah's ability to connect with youth and understand their hopes and fears is inspirational. She always put the needs of our students first, and is always there to help guide and support. Sarah is truly a gifted Child and Youth Worker, and she embodies all of the character attributes that are so highly valued in YR.

### **Steffan Brunette, Markham**

Having character is having the ability to do the right thing when no one is watching. Steffan does that. He is the unassuming educator that carries on his day-to-day work in an excellent fashion. In addition, Steffan does a lot of work behind the scenes, helping students, parents and colleagues in exemplary fashion, asking nothing in return.

### **Support Staff-Educational Assistants and CYW's - Richmond Green SS, Richmond Hill**

The support staff (EA's and CYW's) is a collaborative and cohesive team who creates and provides our students a supportive and safe learning environment. They continue to advocate for these students and ensures that every opportunity is provided to ensure their academic success and wellbeing. This is an extremely caring group of educators who go above and beyond to support students.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Character Through the Arts**

#### **Catherine Clarke, Richmond Hill**

Catherine makes all students feel welcome and fosters an environment of equity and respect. She creates innovative and challenging opportunities that help students learn and she inspires students to achieve their full potential. Many students have commented about the positive impact that Ms. Clarke had on their success in and outside the school.

#### **Isobel Warren, Newmarket**

Since moving to Newmarket 15 years ago, Isobel has taught Creative Writing at the Newmarket library and in her own home. In 2013, she conceived the idea of WORDPLAY: Emerging Writers of York Region, which showcased 15 previously unpublished students.

#### **Love of Dance Committee YCDSB, Aurora**

These teachers volunteer their time and expertise every year to run a group dance showcase for students. The group dance teams must create a dance that demonstrates one character attribute. So besides each group creating a dance they are also discussing and demonstrating character attributes.

#### **Mario Tunzi, Thornhill**

Mario combined his passion for dramatic arts with his dedication to the students in our community. Mr. Tunzi has spent many hours directing a variety of school productions and special events. The haunted house that he organizes annually is enjoyed by students and adults and raises money for ShareLife and Free the Children.

#### **Megan Lodge, Schomberg**

Megan is a very passionate and talented dancer. She dances competitively and practices 15 hours per week. She initiated a dance class to run once a week from her home. She has included children from various learning settings and brought them together to work towards one goal, as a team.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Character Through Sports**

#### **Jim Anderson, Keswick**

For 17 years, Jim has dedicated his time and passion to the Georgina Minor Baseball Association Coaching with both his sons. Jim is now entering his 30th year with the Richmond Hill Men's Hardball League as the ONLY Original Member, Hall of Famer and Past President.

#### **Lenka Kovachis, East Gwillimbury**

Lenka is a Grade 4/5 teacher at Good Shepherd Catholic Elementary School in East Gwillimbury. She has taken on the role of volleyball coach and cross country team coach. Her relentless team spirit has brought this small school to a new level.

#### **Myles Page, Aurora**

Myles continuously instills the importance of all 11 Character attributes, in every practice, game and tournament, regardless of his team's placement. New comers to his teams quickly excel not only in skill but also in developing a high level of sportsmanship, which often makes them a sought after athlete by many organizations.

#### **Philip Horsman, Aurora**

Phil served children and staff in York Region faithfully for over thirty years as a teacher. Now a ten year retiree, Phil services as Chair of the York Region Elementary Athletic Association and under Phil's direction/guidance the schools in York Region DSB raised over 1 million dollars to aid the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

### **Business Person of Character**

#### **Anita Fritzke, Richmond Hill**

Anita, as a Student Services Administrative Assistant, is a front line person working with staff and parents. Parents often rave about how Mrs. Anita makes them feel safe as they navigate educational systems. If she does not know the answer she takes initiative and always makes sure they are connected to the right person.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Anita Smeskal-Donato, Newmarket**

Anita Smeskal-Donato of "For All Occasions Gift Baskets & Sweets" was a huge contributor to the 1st Mount Albert Scout Troop with their winter fundraising campaign. Her efforts were greatly appreciated by all involved in Mount Albert Scouting and without the support of local businesses and concerned citizens such as Mrs. Smeskal-Donato, our Scouting efforts would not be realized.

### **Caretaking team at Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School, Markham**

The caretaking team collaborate with permit holders to create a community hub. In the evenings, weekends and holidays, the Caretakers ensure that community members who permit our school have a welcoming atmosphere to host events. Our Caretakers support more than 1500 permits each year.

### **Caretaking team at Windham Ridge Public School, Richmond Hill**

The caretaking team demonstrates exemplary character as they continuously put the safety and wellbeing of students and staff foremost in their planning, actions, and interactions. They have worked collaboratively, enthusiastically and with great initiative, especially through the added challenges of this winter.

### **Donna Clark, Lori MacLaughlin and Candice Chan, Markham**

Donna, Lori and Candice are the secretarial staff at Stonebridge P.S. Each of them as individuals, exemplify all the character attributes and collectively they work in tandem to serve the needs of everyone in the school community. They are devoted and committed to creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

### **Dr. Judith Ann Ancheta, Markham**

As a naturopathic doctor, Dr. Ancheta is both enthusiastic and passionate. She strives to motivate, inspire and educate her patients and the community to achieve optimal health. She is a kind and compassionate caregiver who deeply cares about her patients and takes the time to understand their needs. She has a very positive attitude - always smiling and cheerful.

### **Dr. Sheila Jalili, Richmond Hill**

MEDIC8 CLINIC is a full-service wellness centre that has been nominated Top 10 Best Businesses in Richmond Hill every year since they opened. The skilled staff operate under a 'patient first' philosophy. Dr. Jalili is the owner of Medic 8 Clinic. Each customer is treated as a family member with the utmost respect and dignity.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Humera Maryam, Vaughan**

Humera is a transformational business leader, who is passionate about the well-being of kids. She identified the need for an early education center in York Region and started one in Vaughan which is nurturing the future talent of Canada.

### **Josie Zambito, East Gwillimbury**

Josie has recently taken on the role of School Secretary at Good Shepherd Catholic School in Holland Landing. She has worked very hard to "get to know" every staff member, child and parent within our school community in a very short time frame. She is the first person that greets visitors to our school and she is always friendly and welcoming to all.

### **Ken Thurston, Aurora**

Through a 38 year career in public education, Ken has demonstrated outstanding community leadership in addition to exemplary organizational leadership. As Director of the York Region District School Board, one of the largest employers in York Region, Ken leads with character and also actively promotes living, working and learning with character with all the Board's students and staff.

### **Madeline Lee, Markham**

In every school community, there is an unsung hero. Someone who works behind the scenes doing jobs that most do not even realize needs doing. Someone who displays responsibility, initiative, quietly celebrating everyone's successes, and compassionately supporting all those around them. At Highgate Public School, that person is Madeline Lee.

### **Norma Trivino, Richmond Hill**

Norma has high moral and ethical standards, is genuine and authentic, and is always willing to help. Through her work with the Hispanic community, she has consistently demonstrated professionalism, dedication and civic behavior.

### **Paul Connors, Keswick**

If music is in the air, then the Connors must be nearby. From establishing a music store in 1978 to raising four talented children, to establishing Music In The Streets Festival in 1996, to supporting numerous local events with the families musical talents, to generously donating lessons/items to help other organizations is just the tip of the metronome for Paul, wife Thea and their great family.

### **Rachel Schklar, Richmond Hill**



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

Rachel, Owner of Pilates North, works with the residents of Richmond Hill to provide them with a safe and encouraging atmosphere to improve their fitness and wellness. Rachel has developed a culture of giving back and helping those in need and has used her space and resources to raise more than \$15,000 for various charities.

### **Sam Bozuk, Keswick**

Sam, owner of Georgina's Prestige Jewelry, has the finest jewelry and the kindest heart. His generous donations generate considerable money for many community events Kidsfest, Georgina Challenge, Sutton Fair, Terry Fox Run, Hospice Georgina, Sandgate and more. His heart shines brighter than any diamond!

### **Shana Baptista, Newmarket**

Shana sews creations for the community. The most notable being the special products for the children's of Bloorview Hospital. Track ties, feeding bag covers, special bibs, syringe roll kits, cooling vests and custom pillow covers are just some of the special warm fun she gives to the children.

## **Organization of Character – Profit**

### **Lisa Palmer - Valuable Lessons, Holland Landing**

Valuable Lessons, by Lisa Palmer, has spent years working at the grassroots level of our York Region community, fostering growth and personal development in the lives of local youth. Their original workshops teach mindfulness and skills that children will take with them through adulthood.

### **On The Floor, Markham**

On The Floor is a newly formed company and its owners Mitchell Jackson and Lisa Hupe have made it their goal to make sure that they do as much as they can to give back. In every event they plan they try to recognize the ways they can incorporate giving back. In their first year alone they managed to gross over \$30,000 for Sick Kids.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Positively Kind, Newmarket**

Beth, along with her sisters Erin Martin and Kit Woods have formed a business called "Positively Kind". They go into schools and speak at conferences, promoting the idea of kindness and gratitude, at a time when the world needs it the most. They are inspiring and beautiful souls, inside and out.

## **Organization of Character - Not for Profit or Service Organization**

### **Canadian Federation of University Women, Aurora/Newmarket**

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) is a national organization with international ties. For 57 years, the Aurora/Newmarket club with its 240 members has promoted human rights and education for girls and women. Membership does not require a university degree and is open to all women who choose to support their mission.

### **DANI - Developing and Nurturing Independence, Thornhill**

The DANI organization is ground-breaking and innovative in creating opportunities for young adults with disabilities to participate fully as valued and contributing members of the community. Their mission is to ensure those with disabilities enjoy a meaningful and dignified quality of life.

### **Richmond Hill Horticultural Society, Richmond Hill**

The Horticultural Society is a long standing group who has beautified the Town of Richmond Hill through many direct and indirect actions over the past 100 years. Their motto is simply "To increase interest in the culture of flower, fruit and vegetables and to make our village more attractive".

### **YMCA York Region Employment & Community Services, Richmond Hill**

This organization works with all the Character Community core values daily. When the staff learned that two colleagues were facing these cancer challenges they rallied around and collected money for medicine and for transportation costs to and from the hospital, made food and ensured healthy groceries where available, and maintained daily contact with both ladies by email, text and in person.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Change our World - Environmental**

#### **Dale McCleese, Vaughan**

For the last 4 years, Dale has spearheaded the Maple Lions Club E-waste program throughout York Region, to ensure the safe and proper disposal of electronic waste, and to promote reuse and refurbishment of working equipment that will be donated to families with need.

#### **Mike Roberts, Newmarket**

Mike Roberts is influential in his role with the York Region District School Board staff and students in affecting positive change in energy conservation. Through Mike's leadership, encouragement, perseverance, determination and own positive modelling of character and environmental stewardship, he is an excellent candidate for this award.

#### **Nathalie Rudner, Newmarket**

Nathalie cares deeply about the environment and the way in which children of all ages can work to improve practices in schools and communities. She works with YRDSB staff to ensure that they support students and learn from their concern for the environment. She has formed partnerships with municipal staff and community agencies to garner additional support for students and their schools.

#### **St. Padre Pio Catholic Elementary School, Woodbridge**

St. Padre Pio and its Eco Schools Committee, headed by Ms. Gordinho, has worked very hard this year to make changes in the way we do things, to help conserve the environment and make the world a better place. Notably, they recently received Bronze-level status from Eco Schools Ontario in recognition for their efforts on behalf of the environment.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Change our World - Community**

#### **Constable Antonio Cedore – Badge #1306, Aurora**

Constable Cedrone is committed and dedicated above and beyond the call of duty to helping youth. Through his dedication to community service, he encourages and promotes personal and community relationships. By creating new and innovative programs and initiatives, PC Cedrone greatly enhances the lives of our youth within our community.

#### **Deborah Joyce, Markham**

Deborah is a dedicated, caring and community minded individual who has demonstrated excellence in the area of building community. She works tirelessly to advocate for all stakeholders to truly build an inclusive environment where everyone is truly welcome and truly heard.

#### **Eastern Gate Village, Stouffville**

Eastern Gate Community shows compassion, fairness, honesty, inclusiveness, integrity, initiative, perseverance and responsibility. The residents range from the ages of 60 to 90 and “look out for each other”. The residents take pride in the community and this is obvious with the beautiful flower gardens in the summer, decorations at Christmas or any special occasion.

#### **Garima Jindal, Stouffville**

Garima is an exceptional young person who does so much for her community, both at school and in her town. She goes above and beyond what an average young person of her age does and is constantly a positive role model to others. She is involved in many worthwhile teams, committees and volunteer experiences, while also having a high academic average.

#### **Constable Greg Kydd - Badge #1502, Aurora**

Constable Greg Kydd has positively impacted thousands of York Region students each year with his dynamic and informative traffic safety, bicycle safety and internet safety presentations. He has been integral to the success of our Community Safety Village community events and officer training opportunities.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Jennifer Anderson, Keswick**

Event planning and community go hand in hand for Jennifer Anderson's Talk of the Town Events. Her mission is to create events that promote what the community has to offer. Her annual "Stilettos & Sneakers" event raises considerable proceeds from the purse auctions and sales which go to new equipment at Southlake Regional Health Centre's integrated cancer screening program.

### **John Alton, Stouffville**

John gets so involved in many things and always wants to help out where needed. John takes initiative at school when he started up a music club called the "Rock & Roll Club". He and his co-president recognized a need and started the club with 4 students and now it has grown to 10-15 students who come out each week.

### **Kelly Broome-Plumley, Newmarket**

Kelly demonstrates a sincere interest in her community. One only need consider her roles in local charitable causes and her continuous desire to do more. Kelly is out to change our world through demonstrating great character in all her community interests.

### **Melinda Garel, Keswick**

Melinda volunteers her time through the week to local churches and non-profit organizations and provides meals, clothing and financial assistance to the needy. When she heard of families in need, she immediately comes to the aid with her time, her money and meeting any needs that she can. She recognizes what needs to be done and finds a way to go and get the job done and never sits back to wait for others to do something,

### **MS Society, York North Chapter, Newmarket**

The MS Society, York North Chapter is made up of many wonderful and talented volunteers who give their time and energy to the community. They strive to make a difference for those affected by MS. This group helps those involved in respectful, compassionate and resourceful ways.

### **Nusrat Parveen, Richmond Hill**

Nusrat is an international physician, working towards her medical licence in Canada, and she volunteers her spare time to the health and well-being of the people. She is also mentoring a group of 40 internationally trained physicians in GTA to help them with their exams and alternative careers.



## **2014 Character Awards Nominees**

### **Rosario Fava, Woodbridge**

Rosario has been an active member in his community, putting in time with countless committees through the years that strive to reach out to and join communities throughout the world. Rosario's all around good character makes a difference with many people by strengthening relationships and building stronger community appreciation.

### **St. Catherine of Siena, Woodbridge**

This group meets on a weekly basis to engage in Social Justice Initiatives. They have organized several events at both the global and local levels to support the marginalized. As well, they have raised awareness among the school community about the importance of participating and contributing to a just society.