

City of Vaughan's 2024 Volunteer Recognition Awards

Recipients (2023)

Jason Abraham

Jason Abraham is receiving this recognition because of his exceptional dedication and passion as a coach within the Woodbridge Basketball Association (WBA). Throughout the association's history, Jason has proven himself to be one of our most committed and enthusiastic coaches. In the last 7 years Jason goes above and beyond to mentor young athletes, teaching them the values of teamwork while also focusing on honing their individual skills to suit their playing styles. Jason also provides valuable assistance in training other coaches and actively participates in player training sessions, ensuring a high standard of coaching throughout the organization.

Ada Abramova

Ada Abramova is receiving this recognition for her remarkable contributions and kindness over the past decade to all the residents at the Mapleglen Seniors Club Residence. Ada has taken the initiative and responsibility to arrange and organize social gatherings for the community. Her dedication and commitment have significantly improved the lives of seniors, fostering a sense of community and companionship. Ada's selfless actions have had a positive impact on the well-being and happiness of those around her, and we are grateful for her continued efforts to support and uplift others.

Tom Aloia

Tom Aloia is a recipient of this recognition because of his dedicated time as a volunteer at Clarico Place of York Region. Serving as an active and invaluable member of the Board of Directors for over a decade, Tom's diligent efforts have contributed to raising over \$250,000 through philanthropic initiatives and exemplifies the principle of "walking the talk" by giving extensively of himself to the organization through selfless commitment and leadership make him a deserving recipient of this award.

Maria Apostolos

Maria Apostolos is receiving this recognition for her exceptional two-year tenure as a residence support volunteer at Hospice Vaughan. Maria's greatest strength lies in her personalized care for families and clients, taking the time to understand and support everyone she encounters. She is not just a volunteer but an integral part of the Hospice Vaughan family.

Maria Attard

Maria Attard has dedicated her time at the Hanging Out Together Free Drop-In Program for Persons with Special Needs for the past two years. Maria not only assists with setting up and cleaning up at our program but also extends her kindness and support to various other initiatives. As a grandmother of five grandchildren, she volunteers at St. Peter's school on Pancake Tuesdays, preparing pancakes for the students. Additionally, Maria volunteers at a 55+ Seniors club and provides assistance to two widowed seniors with their daily tasks, making their lives more manageable. Her selfless dedication to serving others embodies the spirit of volunteerism and makes her a deserving recipient of this award.

Mafalda Bianchi

Mafalda Bianchi is receiving this recognition because of her exceptional volunteer work and selfless service to the people at the St. Peter's Church. Her instrumental role in fundraising for St. Peter's Church, her commitment to the choir, and countless hours of effort to support those in need showcase her unwavering dedication, enthusiasm, and positivity that she brings to everyone around her. We are honored to recognize Mafalda for all the work she has done for this community.

Adam Birrell

Adam Birrell is receiving this recognition for his outstanding four-year tenure as the president of the Thornhill Historical Society. His influence and guidance as a leader have significantly helped the organization and the larger Thornhill communities during its most challenging times. Throughout his presidency, Adam

has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, navigating the society through various challenges while remaining dedicated to our heritage education and preservation initiatives. His ability to offer insightful direction and encouragement has been instrumental in maintaining engagement and enthusiasm among our members and supporters.

Anamaria Bran

Anamaria Bran's compassionate nature is evident in her interactions with others. She approaches every task with empathy and a genuine desire to make a positive impact. Her unwavering dedication, exceptional leadership, and impactful initiatives have made a significant difference in the Fuerza Latina organization and the community at large. Anamaria's compassionate nature, proactive approach, and reliability make her a role model for volunteers and an asset to Fuerza Latina.

Jerry Buligan

Jerry Buligan is being recognized for his incredible volunteer work at Villa Leonardo Gambin Nursing home. Since 2005, Jerry has demonstrated unwavering dedication to Villa Leonardo Gambin. Notably, Jerry conceived and spearheaded the Better Beds campaign, raising over a million dollars to provide new, safe, comfortable, and technologically advanced beds for all residents. Thanks to his leadership, VLG now leads the province with the lowest number of resident fall incidents.

Gavin Cael Giron

Gavin Giron is receiving this recognition because of his exceptional dedication and commitment to the Philippine Heritage Band (PHB). Gavin's consistent attendance at PHB's Sunday rehearsals and performances showcases his reliability and passion for music. As a member of the trumpet section and a section leader, Gavin exhibits outstanding teamwork, cooperation, and leadership qualities. He is patient and always ready to assist new recruits, contributing significantly to the growth and cohesion of the band.

Donald Paul Caines

Paul Caines is being honored for his unwavering dedication and significant contributions to ensuring the presence of the Vaughan Fire Department's Rehab vehicle at numerous extended fire and emergency scenes over the past decade. Paul's commitment extended to his personal time, where he diligently maintained the vehicle's supplies, trained new volunteers, and consistently responded promptly to emergencies without hesitation, all while prioritizing the safety and well-being of those under his care.

Danilo Cal

Since 1979, Danilo has been actively involved in various community initiatives, including coaching children's soccer, and promoting adult and senior well-being through indoor soccer programs. He is a founding member of the Knights of Columbus at Immaculate Conception and St. Clare of Assisi churches. In 2018, he founded ALPINI VAUGHAN, focusing on the well-being of senior veterans. Danilo's leadership has led to numerous events promoting senior safety and well-being, resulting in significant contributions to local charities and countless volunteer hours.

Stephanie Cardillo

Stephanie Cardillo is being recognized for her outstanding volunteer work at Blue Veil Charity/Sara Elizabeth Centre. As a social support worker, Stephanie has demonstrated unwavering dedication and commitment to her role. Her remarkable patience, empathy, and genuine passion for working with teens and young adults who are developmentally and physically challenged create a supportive and inclusive environment where every individual feels valued.

Diva Castellano

Diva Castellano is receiving this recognition for her unwavering commitment and dedication as a volunteer at Pine York Seniors Club for the past 10 years., Diva has actively contributed by calling numbers for bingo, assisting with coffee service during breaks, and serving lunches to seniors at the club. She consistently offers

assistance to members in need and provides valuable information. Diva is well-liked and respected by all for her willingness to help and her friendly demeanor.

Alexia Castro Molina

Alexia Castro Molina is receiving this recognition for her outstanding contributions as a volunteer peer mentor over the past two years. Demonstrating qualities of dedication, patience, and compassion, Alexia has made a profound impact on her mentee's lives. Particularly noteworthy is Alexia's assistance in helping her mentee navigate challenges such as anxiety and bullying upon immigrating to Canada. Thanks to Alexia's mentorship, her mentee has experienced significant personal growth, becoming more confident, outgoing, and secure in her identity.

Domenico Cioffi

Domenico Cioffi is receiving this recognition for his exceptional volunteer work at the Father E. Bulfon Seniors Club. Serving as President for many years, Domenico has dedicated significant time to supporting seniors in the community. He consistently ensures the smooth operation of the club by attending daily and ensuring everything is in order. With approximately 8 years as President and over 20 years of involvement in the club, Domenico's contributions have had a profound impact on the well-being of seniors and the success of the organization.

Frank Crudo

Frank Crudo is being recognized for his commitment and contributions to the success of Vaughan Slow Pitch since it began 26 years ago. Serving as Vice President, he plays a direct role in overseeing every aspect of the league. Frank's instrumental efforts have been pivotal in the league's remarkable growth, expanding from 6 teams to over 60 teams. Without Frank Crudo's dedication and leadership, the league would not have achieved its current level of success.

Jane Davidson

Jane Davidson is being recognized for her exceptional 25 years of volunteer service at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, notably within the Creative

Learning department. With her engaging humor and deep understanding of gallery exhibitions, Jane enchants guests during both in-person and virtual tours. She seamlessly mentors new Docent team members, generously imparting her knowledge. Furthermore, as Treasurer of the McMichael Volunteer Committee, Jane plays a pivotal role in supporting its activities.

Nandranie Deonandan

Nandranie Deonandan is receiving this recognition for her dedicated volunteer work at Human Endeavour. Since 2014, Nandranie has been actively involved with the organization, and in 2022, she was elected to its board. Her strength, resilience, and positive attitude in the face of difficulties and challenges make her a strong role model. Nandranie is passionate about women's empowerment and mental health and is known for her excellent motivational speaking skills. Nandranie's commitment to serving others truly embodies the spirit of volunteerism.

Ilaria Isabella Di Battista

Ilaria Di Battista is receiving this recognition for her outstanding dedication to mental health and addiction issues by starting an initiative in 2023 aimed at generating funds and awareness for "My Second Home," a women's bed-based program in Vaughan. Through her efforts, approximately \$12,000 was raised, directly benefiting the program, and raising awareness about women's mental health and addiction challenges. Presently, "My Second Home" accommodates up to eight women, offering a comprehensive 90-day support program emphasizing recovery and life skills.

Cherry Di Gregorio

Cherry Di Gregorio is receiving this recognition for her volunteer work at Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan. Starting as a volunteer in 2019 in the Philippine Friendship Garden, Cherry's dedication and contributions led her to join the Board in 2021. She played a pivotal role in establishing individual raised beds, donating home-grown seedlings for the seniors' garden, and dedicating numerous hours to

watering. Cherry generously donated paint, food, kitchen supplies, and provided support in website maintenance and content creation.

Gianni Di Iorio

Gianni Di Iorio is receiving this recognition for his exceptional contributions as the manager of the U16 Vaughan Kings AAA Hockey Team since 2017. His loyalty to the organization and commitment to maintaining a positive team culture have been instrumental in the club's success. Gianni provides guidance to other managers, parents, and players, demonstrating integrity, honesty, and hard work in all aspects of his role. Under Gianni's leadership, the U16 Vaughan Kings have achieved remarkable success, won multiple championships, and earned recognition from the City of Vaughan.

Dragica Dimovska

Dragica Dimovska founded the Woodbridge Macedonian Seniors Club 12 years ago and has served as its President for 10 of those years. In her role, she meticulously organizes all events, including weekly and monthly celebrations, and ensures the seamless hosting of special guests. She is known for her kindness and friendly demeanor, she takes the time to engage in meaningful conversations with each member, creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

Maria Durigon

Maria Durigon is being recognized for her extensive volunteerism with the Wallace House Society. Over the course of more than 10 years, she has actively participated in various roles, including presenting arrangements for Flower Shows, maintaining the Wallace House Garden, and serving as co-President in 2017 and 2018, showcasing her leadership abilities and commitment to the organization's mission. Maria's ongoing dedication to the society, from decorating public spaces to selecting gardens for tours, highlights her remarkable commitment to community service.

Carolyn Edgecombe

Over the course of six years, Carolyn has dedicated herself to supporting Habitat for Humanity GTA, contributing over 1,400 hours of her time as a volunteer. Her tireless commitment to processing products and merchandising the store has been instrumental in maintaining the operations of the Vaughan ReStore. Additionally, Carolyn's generosity extends to her role as a star product donor, consistently bringing in unique and interesting items for sale. Her friendly guidance to fellow volunteers ensures that high standards are maintained, even in her absence.

Ellen Erdman

Ellen Erdman is receiving this recognition for her dedicated volunteer work at Developing and Nurturing Independence (DANI). Over the past five years, she devotes her time weekly to brighten the lives of adults with disabilities through music. Ellen's inclusive approach fosters joy and connection among our community members, making her an invaluable asset to DANI.

Syed Fahad Farooq

Sayed Fahad Farooq is being recognized for his exceptional volunteerism with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association. Despite being just 22 years old and balancing university studies while applying for medical school, Fahad has demonstrated outstanding dedication as a volunteer. Throughout 2023, he consistently dedicated time to volunteer, showcasing his remarkable commitment to community service. Fahad's leadership by example and years of involvement distinguish him as a passionate advocate for serving humanity and guiding local youth.

Dovid Faynberg

Dovid Faynberg is receiving this recognition for his outstanding commitment in organizing programming for young Russian Jews in Thornhill. His dedication extends to running young adult events which help to bring people together. Dovid's remarkable talent for connecting with people and organizing activities has significantly enriched the experiences of those he serves.

Sabrina Ferrari

Sabrina Ferrari is receiving this recognition for her exceptional volunteer work at the Canadian Cancer Society. Since 2017, Sabrina has served as an exemplary Run Director, demonstrating kindness, tenacity, and hard work. She navigates contracts and proposals to ensure the success of their events, inspiring her friends, family, and network to support the cause. Sabrina's leadership and problem-solving skills have made her an invaluable asset, and her dedication to the cause is truly commendable.

Cecilia Ferreira

As a devoted parishioner at St. Joseph the Worker in Thornhill for over 30 years, Cecilia has exemplified tireless dedication, selflessness, and generosity. Throughout her years of service, Cecilia has given both her time and resources for the betterment of the community and beyond. Her unwavering commitment and dependability make her an invaluable asset to the parish, where she serves as one of our most dependable volunteers, always striving to enhance the well-being of those around her.

Dolores Filippelli

Since her early beginnings with the Maple Pioneer Italian Seniors Club, Dolores has demonstrated unwavering dedication and enthusiasm. She started by attending various functions and quickly transitioned into a mentorship role for several of the older seniors, providing guidance and support. Dolores plays a crucial role in engaging our members by making calls to check in and invite them to events, which are essential for fostering socialization within the community. Additionally, she actively participates in Bingo afternoons, adding excitement by calling out numbers and ensuring everyone has a great time.

Elio Gatto

Elio Gatto is receiving this recognition for demonstrating his outstanding contributions as the Marketing and Communications Director at Bridges of Love of York Region. For more than two years, Elio has played a pivotal role in enhancing the charity's outreach efforts. He has been instrumental in revamping Bridges of

Love's website, making it more user-friendly and informative. Elio's exceptional creativity, unwavering dedication, and ability to inspire others have led to significant community engagement and support.

Joel Geller

Joel Geller is receiving this recognition for his dedicated service to delivering meals to seniors in the community through Circle of Care's Meals on Wheels Program since 2019. His selfless dedication and contributions is evident in his consistent desire to volunteer his time and energy without hesitation. Whether it's assisting during delivery times, providing expertise in driving experience for efficient routes, or being a pivotal volunteer in meal packing at least three times a week, Joel brings a positive attitude and uplifting spirit every single time.

Heidi Giraldi

Heidi Giraldi is receiving this recognition for her volunteerism with Langstaff Academy. In the past six years, she has taken on the role of volunteer administrator, diligently managing the church's day-to-day accounting and administrative tasks. Under her leadership, the organization has experienced remarkable growth, providing essential support to local families in need of food, clothing, and household products.

Joseph Grando

Joseph Grando is receiving this recognition for his exceptional volunteer contributions to The Vitanova Foundation. With over twenty years of service, including numerous terms as a board member and several years as chair, Joseph has played a pivotal role in the organization's success. As a retired banker, his expertise in finance has been invaluable, particularly in ensuring the financial stability of Vitanova, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving its clients without charging any fees. Joseph's commitment to Vitanova's mission has made a lasting impact on the organization and the individuals it serves.

Frank Greco

Frank Greco is a recipient of this recognition for his volunteer work at Kleinburg Business Improvement Association (KBIA). As a key member for nearly two decades, Frank has been a cornerstone of the Kleinburg community. Currently serving as the KBIA's Treasurer, Frank ensures financial stability by managing budgets and leading audits with the City. His organizational skills and deep knowledge of the community contribute to advancing Kleinburg's local and regional recognition. From co-organizing events like the Kleinburg Tree Lighting to spearheading initiatives such as the Kleinburg Christmas Village, Frank's leadership and dedication are commendable.

Avi Grinberg

Avi Grinberg is receiving this recognition for his outstanding contributions as the Director of Shomrim Toronto over the past three years. His strategic and operational leadership has been instrumental in fostering a safer Jewish community in Vaughan. Avi's relationship-building skills have played a key role in strengthening community ties and enhancing safety measures. His tireless commitment to ensuring the well-being and security of the community reflects his passion and leadership qualities.

Eric Hansen

Eric Hansen is being recognized for his exceptional leadership and dedication as a build leader with Million Dollar Smiles for over seven years. Eric has organized playground builds and provided guidance to volunteers on construction techniques. Eric's positive attitude and infectious smile have made him a beloved member of the build team, and his passion, commitment, and reliability have been instrumental in the organization's success. He stands out as one of the most powerful team players, known for his organizational skills and determination to make his team proud.

Josh Ingram

Josh Ingram is being recognized for his commitment to the volunteer work he does with the Weston Downs Ratepayers' Association, where he serves as the

treasurer. Josh's exceptional commitment to managing the association's finances, along with his responsiveness and invaluable expertise, greatly benefit the organization. His contributions are deserving of recognition and honor, not only for the Weston Downs Ratepayers' Association but also for the broader Weston Downs community and the City of Vaughan.

Dilshad Khan

Dilshad Khan is being recognized for her exceptional volunteerism with the Muslim Women of Vaughan since the organization's establishment in 2020. Dilshad's unwavering dedication to serving her community is evident through her diverse range of contributions. She has selflessly conducted storytelling sessions for children, provided valuable assistance to new immigrants in learning English, supported seniors in adapting to technology, and contributed to the creation of quilts for hospital donations. Her compassionate, respectful, and humble demeanor has not only benefited the organization but has also left a profound positive impact on the broader community.

Jamil Khan

As one of the founding members of the Islamic Society of Vaughan, Jamil's dedication is unparalleled. He not only serves as one of our most generous donors but also actively participates as a volunteer. Despite his senior years, Jamil continues to tirelessly contribute to the organization. Whether assisting with finances, spearheading fundraising efforts, or hosting events, his commitment remains unwavering.

Angie Kilinkas

Angie Kilinkas is receiving this recognition for her exceptional volunteer work with the Circle of Friends-Butterfly Kisses Memorial Release. She is dedicated to organizing the butterfly memorial event, which supports community members in Vaughan who have lost a loved one. Angie's efforts contribute to raising funds for charity, demonstrating her commitment to giving back. Her energy, enthusiasm, thoughtfulness, and collaborative spirit make her a pleasure to work with.

Rita Leva

Rita Leva is being recognized for her nine years of dedicated volunteer service at Maple Health Centre. Her commitment to the Volunteer Team has been exceptional, particularly in her role at the Gift Shop, where she has made it a welcoming space for residents and families. Rita's warmth, kindness, and willingness to assist have left a lasting impact on everyone she encounters.

Margaret Lowe

Margaret Lowe is receiving this recognition because of her exceptional 14-year dedication as a volunteer, particularly in supporting the White Rose Gift Shop to raise critical funds for various hospital initiatives. Margaret's unwavering commitment has made her a reliable pillar in the organization, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters growth and commitment among her team members. In her roles as a Wayfinding and Gift Shop volunteer, Margaret consistently demonstrates exemplary customer service. Her attention to detail ensures that patients, visitors, and customers alike leave with a smile on their face, contributing positively to their overall experience at the hospital.

Emily Yichun Lu

For eight years, Emily has selflessly volunteered as a Zumba instructor and leader of the Kleinburg Dance Wellness Group, catering to the fitness needs of over 268 residents. Emily's exceptional leadership, dedication, and ability to inspire others have played a crucial role in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment at the community gym. Despite facing personal challenges, Emily has remained steadfast in her commitment to enhancing community mental and physical wellness, leaving a lasting impact on the community.

Giovanna Lucchese

Giovanna Lucchese is receiving this recognition of her exceptional contributions and dedication to the First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan. As a dedicated member since 2016, Her compassionate and caring approach uplifted our seniors during challenging times. Additionally, she contributed as a leader in program planning and conducted weekly health improvement classes focused on Reflexology, promoting overall wellness among our members. Giovanna's

proactive and positive contributions have had a profound impact on the club and its members.

Amatul Salam Malik

Amatul Salam Malik is receiving this recognition for her commitment and dedication as a volunteer for 20 years at Lajna Ima'illah Canada. As the National President for 7 years, she facilitated a sense of sisterhood among Ahmadi women and promoted their empowerment. Amatul's compassionate leadership extended to providing individual support to members across the country. Although her term as president ended in September 2023, she continues to serve as the Assistant to the new president.

Daniel Marchione

Daniel Marchione is receiving this recognition for his outstanding dedication and attention to detail in distributing newsletters and notices throughout the community for the past two years as part of the Concord West Ratepayers Association. Additionally, Daniel's involvement in park clean-ups and annual neighborhood gatherings further exemplifies his community spirit and deservingness of this recognition.

Vincenza Marzano-Kooner

Vincenza Marzano-Kooner is being recognized for her exceptional volunteerism, who tirelessly supports numerous charitable causes both locally and internationally. For over a decade, she has demonstrated unwavering dedication to maintaining and sustaining three schools in Tanzania, Africa, through the Olive Branch for Children Charity. Vincenza's commitment to children knows no bounds, as she continues to champion their well-being and education. Additionally, she actively participates in animal welfare initiatives, facilitating placements for animals with suitable families both locally and internationally.

Bev Maxey

Bev Maxey is receiving this recognition because of his invaluable contributions to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society and the organization of the Woodbridge Fall Fair. One of Bev's notable achievements is the establishment of a storage program on the fairgrounds, which has greatly benefited the Society. Additionally, for over two decades, Bev and his wife Linda Mae have diligently prepared, organized, and managed the Community Building for the Fall Fair. Their combined efforts have significantly enhanced the fair's offerings and overall experience for attendees.

Stacy Mazzuca

Stacy Mazzuca is receiving this recognition for her outstanding volunteer work at Father John Kelly Catholic School Council. For over 8 years, Stacy has consistently dedicated her time and efforts to enriching the school community. She brings forward initiatives that engage and enhance the experiences of students and staff. Stacy is always ready to lend a helping hand for council activities, and events, delivering hot lunches weekly, or assisting with decorations as needed.

Diana Menahemov

Diana Menahemov is receiving this recognition for her exceptional dedication to volunteering within the Jewish community of Woodbridge and beyond since Chabad Jewish Centre of Woodbridge's establishment in 2019. In 2023, Diana demonstrated extraordinary compassion by assisting with shopping and delivering essential items to elderly and sick individuals in the community, showcasing her warmth and love towards residents. Her unique talent for making others feel loved has left an indelible impact on those she serves.

Anthony Misquitta

Anthony Misquitta is receiving this recognition for his outstanding dedication and enthusiasm as a member of Vaughan in Motion. Anthony's energy and deep passion shine through in all his contributions. Despite his quiet demeanor, Anthony is an advocate who actively recruits sponsorship, offers insightful cost-cutting solutions, and brings valuable perspectives to the table. His commitment to the organization's mission for Cancer Care is evident in every action he takes.

Radana Mlckovsky

Radana Mlckovsky is being recognized for her dedicated volunteer service at Vaughan Tennis Club. As a member of the Board of Directors and Executive for nearly a decade, Radana has shown unwavering commitment despite her busy life. She balances a full-time job and raising children while still finding time to assist with club activities and ensure financial matters are in order. Radana's efforts to reorganize the Treasurer role and financial systems have brought clarity and efficiency for all board members. Her contributions were recognized with the Ontario Tennis Association Volunteer Award in 2023.

Vanessa Morra

Vanessa Morra is receiving this recognition in acknowledgment of her exceptional dedication and volunteer time as Miss Youth Bocce from January to December 2023. She has consistently displayed enthusiasm and readiness to assist with various tasks, such as presenting gifts, medals, and trophies, and engaging in social interactions with a warm and welcoming smile. Vanessa has also positively impacted the Special Needs children by being a delightful and kind individual.

Anoosha Munawar

Anoosha Munawar is receiving this recognition for her outstanding contributions to Humanity First since 2021. Anoosha has consistently demonstrated motivation and dedication, continually taking on additional responsibilities within the organization. In particular, she has excelled in her leadership role in conducting food drives in the neighborhood, overseeing volunteers, and providing training to new team members. Anoosha's commitment extends to supervising food deliveries to clients' homes, ensuring that more than 3,000 people benefit from her leadership in serving those in need.

Negar Nasrkhani

Negar Nasrkhani is receiving this recognition for her dedicated volunteer work of no-cost flower arranging workshops at Sunrise Senior Living. As the founder, she

aimed to enhance support for seniors and hospital patients while fostering meaningful interactions. Our residents express immense delight in meeting Negar and her team, eagerly anticipating their future visits. Negar exhibited compassion and patience while engaging with participants of varying abilities, accommodating individuals with physical handicaps and cognitive impairments.

Matthew Newman

Matthew Newman is receiving this recognition because of his exceptional dedication and advocacy for mental health through the Caritas School of Life since 2016, when he was just 16 years old. Through his passionate voice in public speeches and on social media platforms, Matthew has played a crucial role in breaking down stigma, raising awareness, and generating funds for this important cause. In 2023, Matthew led campaigns that shed light on the profound impact of mental health on individuals affected by human trafficking, highlighting the intricate relationship between these issues.

Carina Paoletti

Carina Paoletti is receiving this recognition for her remarkable dedication to the Vaughan Pet Community through WOOF-A-PALOOZA. Since founding the organization in 2015, she has tirelessly volunteered her time and expertise, embodying an entrepreneurial spirit coupled with compassion and empathy for people and animals. As the director and event coordinator, Carina has facilitated essential amenities, provided volunteer opportunities for students, and secured grant funding for canine emergency first aid training. She successfully advocated for P.A.W. Pet Awareness Week in Vaughan, and Carina's impact extends beyond organizational boundaries, she brings comfort to hospitals, Hospice Vaughan and local businesses.

Avijeet Parmar

Avijeet Parmar is being recognized for his dedicated volunteer work at the Community & Home Assistance to Seniors organization (CHATS). Since 2017, Avi has been a devoted member of the community and home assistance to the seniors organization, initially contributing to the Finance & Audit Committee.

Inspired by his personal experience as a family caregiver, he expanded his involvement, now chairing the Finance Committee and serving as Vice Chair of the Board. Avi actively participates in events and advocates passionately for the well-being of older adults.

Vina Patel

Vina Patel is receiving this recognition for her longstanding contributions to the Thornhill Senior Citizens Club. As a certified Yoga Instructor, Vina generously volunteers her time to teach Yoga, promoting physical and mental well-being among the members. Over the past two years, she has served on the board, bringing valuable insights and contributions to the club's operations and initiatives. Vina plays a vital role in the club's logistical aspects, helping with purchasing groceries, organizing picnics, and coordinating trips for the members.

Nancy R. Payne

Nancy Payne is being recognized for her outstanding contributions to various organizations over the past two decades. As the former President of the Historic Wallace House and a longstanding member of its executive, Nancy has played a pivotal role in preserving local heritage and fostering community engagement. Additionally, her involvement with the Woodbridge Agricultural Society and the organization of the Woodbridge Fall Fair demonstrates her dedication to promoting local culture and traditions. Nancy's involvement in the Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy drive reflects her commitment to honoring veterans and supporting educational initiatives.

Doug Pilkey

Doug Pilkey is being recognized for his exceptional dedication to improving the lives of individuals living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in York Region. Through his tireless volunteer efforts, Doug has played a pivotal role in raising funds to subsidize the costs of accessible equipment for MS members and to support MS research at various medical centers. He serves as the contact for OLG bingo sessions, successfully securing funds for MS research. Additionally, Doug has formed partnerships with corporations for sponsorships of MS causes.

Remarkably, Doug accomplishes all of this while living with MS and working full-time.

Teresa Polito

Teresa Polito is being recognized for her exceptional volunteerism with the Vaughan Soccer Club. Over the last decade, Teresa has demonstrated her dedication by managing both competitive and recreational teams. Her influence extends beyond the field as she fosters a positive atmosphere, enhancing team chemistry and morale. Teresa's commitment to the players is evident through her unwavering support and respect, contributing to their personal growth both on and off the pitch. In recognition of her contributions, Teresa was elected as a board member in 2021 and has since served as the club Registrar.

Lolita Prescod

Lolita Prescod is being recognized for her exemplary contributions as the Director of Stakeholder Partnerships at Volunteer Connect York Region. In just five months, she has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to representing the organization within the community, quickly establishing herself as an invaluable asset. Lolita's enthusiasm and dedication have made her a pillar of support, as she tirelessly fosters connections with community leaders and inspires others to embrace volunteerism.

Stephanie Ramat Bello

Stephanie Ramat Bello is being honored with this award for her exceptional volunteerism at RCCG House of Miracles church. In her two years as a church member, she leads the hospitality team, ensuring a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all attendees. Additionally, Stephanie provides valuable assistance to the pastor, including counseling support. Her talent for decoration has significantly enhanced the church's appearance, adding to its beauty. Stephanie's unwavering commitment and love for serving others have made a lasting impact on the church community.

Laura Rinaldo

Laura Rinaldo is receiving this recognition for her remarkable contributions as a volunteer, and President of the South Maple Ratepayers' Association since its establishment in 2018. Over the past six years, and despite balancing work, family, and her role as Association President, Laura has devoted herself wholeheartedly to improving the neighborhood. She played a crucial role in preserving our park from development, resulting in significant enhancements. Whether mobilizing local support, coordinating community cleanups, leading meetings, or managing social media, Laura consistently demonstrates her commitment to serving others.

Nicoletta Rizzi

Nicoletta Rizzi is receiving this recognition for her outstanding contributions to the St. Margaret Mary Friendship Seniors Club. As an organizer of social events for a group of 30-40 seniors on a weekly basis, Nicoletta plays a pivotal role in creating meaningful and enjoyable experiences for seniors. Nicoletta goes above and beyond by organizing special celebrations and these events provide a wonderful opportunity for seniors to socialize, get out of their homes, and connect with one another in a warm and welcoming environment.

Gary Sangha

Gary Sangha is being recognized for his dedicated service as a Trustee of the Vaughan Public Library Board for the past three years, where he currently holds the position of Chair. Gary's colleagues hold him in high regard due to his extensive knowledge of the community and his valuable contributions to board discussions supporting local initiatives. He demonstrates deep respect for his colleagues and their contributions in shaping the board's direction. Gary is a passionate supporter and user of Vaughan's libraries, valuing the services and assistance they provide to their patrons.

Michael Sheinfield

Michael Sheinfield is being recognized for his volunteer work at the City of Vaughan Baseball and Softball Association. He has served as Director of House League Baseball for six years, and his exceptional organizational skills and

unwavering dedication are evident in his management of a team overseeing 85 teams at a time. He spearheaded rule revisions, discipline policy development, and player evaluations. Michael's selfless commitment, contagious enthusiasm, and inclusive leadership truly make him an asset to the organization.

Peter Shin

Peter Shin is a recipient of this recognition because of his commitment and volunteer work at Just the Little Lights Relief Organization. Despite retiring from his positions at the Galleria Supermarket and the operations office just one year ago, Peter has become an exemplary volunteer in 2023. Instead of taking a break, he immediately began dedicating his time to serving others. Peter tirelessly picks up food from COBS Bread three times a week and from the Vaughan Food Bank when needed. He then distributes these supplies to other registered community organizations and individuals in need.

J. D. Singh

J. D. Singh is being recognized for his outstanding contributions and dedication to the Martin Grove Senior Club for many years. Serving as a translator from English to Punjabi, he has played a crucial role in preparing activities and community projects, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all members. Additionally, as a teacher at the University of Toronto, J. D. Singh brings valuable expertise and knowledge to the club. His efforts to assist Indian members by providing translation services and facilitating their participation in club activities are commendable.

Julia Sloan

Julia Sloan is being recognized for her dedicated volunteer efforts at the Yellow Brick House which provides life-saving services and prevention programs for families and communities impacted by violence. Her proactive approach in streamlining administrative tasks, alongside her invaluable contributions to warehouse operations and donor outreach are commendable and appreciated by this organization.

Alex Sues

Alex Sues is receiving this recognition for his unwavering dedication to the 1st Maple Scout Group over the last three years. His infectious enthusiasm and knowledge of outdoor pursuits, especially his love for climbing has motivated numerous children to experience their first camping trip or take on learning how to climb. Alex's commitment to curating engaging activities and his delightful tradition of making his homemade garlic bread at every camp exemplifies his invaluable contributions and exceptional leadership within the organization.

Fulvio Tolone

Fulvio Talone is a recipient of this award for his dedicated volunteer efforts at the Sonoma Heights Seniors Club. For over two decades, he has faithfully served as the treasurer, stepping up to take on additional responsibilities whenever needed. Fulvio warmly welcomes new members, ensuring they feel included and supported within the community. His diligent efforts in coordinating daytime activities and his readiness to lend a helping hand reflect his exceptional commitment. His friendly demeanor and respectful attitude towards others reflect his caring character.

Mary Valenzano

Mary Valenzano is receiving this recognition for her outstanding dedication and invaluable contributions to Waves of Changes for Autism, a charity she joined to give back to her community in Vaughan. As a proud mother of two and a Senior Accountant, Mary brings a wealth of expertise and passion to her role as an Executive Committee member. Her tireless efforts in managing the charity's financials, budgets, and application processes have ensured transparency and meticulous management of resources. Mary's dedication goes beyond administrative tasks – she actively fundraises, securing thousands of dollars in sponsorships.

Sister Maria Winancy

Sister Maria Winancy is being recognized for her exceptional volunteerism with Seniors Creative Hands. For over a decade, Sister Maria Winancy, has dedicated

her time to serving the seniors in her community. She leads a weekly prayer group rosary, utilizing her talents in singing, playing the guitar, piano, and clarinet to uplift and engage the attendees. Many of the seniors who participate in these sessions are isolated, and Sister Maria Winancy's presence brings them not only spiritual comfort but also a sense of companionship and joy. Her compassionate nature and unwavering commitment to serving others make her a truly exceptional individual, always ready to bring a smile to those around her.