

Paramedic chosen for Lord Dufferin IODE's 2021 Citizenship Award

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

While hard work can often times go unnoticed, the community spirit and dedication of a Dufferin County paramedic is being recognized by a local service group.

Cara Burleigh has been selected as the 2021 Citizen of the Year by the Lord Dufferin IODE and received the award at the Ambulance Headquarters in Orangeville (325 Blind Line) last Thursday (March 18).

"It was a big surprise, a very nice honour to receive. I really appreciate being recognized," said Burleigh.

She's been a paramedic for 23 years and volunteers her time with local sports organizations that her children participate in, such as the Junior A Northmen lacrosse league.

Burleigh also is part of the Community Paramedic Program for Dufferin County, which provides home visits to patients with the goal of keeping them out of the emergency room.

In terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, Burleigh told the Citizen while there's been lots of changes for paramedics, herself and her co-workers have been able to adapt along the way.

"We are all very good at rolling with different things that come up, so everyone has stepped right up to do whatever was necessary," she said.

Lord Dufferin IODE vice president, Jessica Cerveny says the award is a great opportunity to honour someone in the community who's deserving of recognition.

"We like to recognize people who are the sort of unsung heroes among everyday people in our community," she said.

Cerveny noted that the Lord Dufferin IODE wanted to award someone in the healthcare industry this year, due to the sacrifices they've made through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The award is typically given out in the early spring but last year it wasn't given out until September because of the novel coronavirus.

"This year its been nice to sort of stay on schedule, with all these protocols in place for COVID restrictions," explained Cerveny.

In addition to receiving a plaque, Burleigh chose the Orangeville Food Bank to receive a \$100 donation from the Lord Dufferin IODE on her behalf.

The Citizenship Award is given out annually and the Lord Dufferin IODE is looking forward to honouring someone again in 2022.