

## Caledon Fire and Emergency Services team

Ceremony held in Bolton to honour new recruits

**By Zachary Roman**

The perseverance of 19 Caledon residents was celebrated on Monday.

On July 17, at Station 302 in Bolton, 19 new volunteer firefighters were welcomed to the Caledon Fire and Emergency Services team at a graduation ceremony attended by friends, family, and dignitaries.

The new firefighters completed their Level 1 and 2 National Fire Protection Association 1001 certifications over the past six months. Achieving this required many hours of study and practical training, all completed under the guidance of Caledon Fire's training officers.

At the graduation ceremony, O Canada was sung by Kiran Singh before Captain Darrin Mottershaw provided opening remarks.

Regional Councillor Mario Russo then addressed the new recruits on behalf of Mayor Annette Groves and Caledon Council. He said it was an honour to be a part of the graduation ceremony and told the graduates they should be very proud of obtaining their certifications.

"We rely on volunteer firefighters to provide assistance and it is wonderful to know we have your support," said Russo. "I'm very proud of all of you for helping Caledon. I wish you all the best in your special and important role."

Caledon's Chief Administrative Officer Carey Herd was the next to address the new recruits and crowd in attendance. She began by saying she was proud to welcome 19 new volunteer firefighters to the Town of Caledon family, noting it's no easy task to complete the training necessary to be a volunteer firefighter.

"You are helping people in their time of need and sometimes at the worst time of their lives," said Herd. "You have the Town's commitment to provide support to you because someday you may need that support for yourself."

Herd thanked the families of the new recruits. She said the time a firefighter spends away from their loved ones means their families are making a sacrifice for a safer Caledon too.

"Thank you for serving the community and putting others first," said Herd, concluding her speech by addressing the recruits. "I wish you each the very best."

Caledon's Fire Chief, Dave Forfar, was next to address the new firefighters and their loved ones.

He gave a passionate speech filled with advice and thanks.

Forfar said being a great firefighter means paying attention to the three lines of defence against fire: public education, fire prevention and regulations, and fire suppression. He said Caledon Fire and Emergency Services' goal is to make Caledon a fire safe community; a goal the new recruits are now playing a big part in.

Forfar told firefighters a critical part of their job is to impart knowledge on fire safety to everyone in their lives. He added that becoming a "subject matter expert" on all things fire safety is a big part of the gig, as people will expect a firefighter to know their stuff.

“Thank you to each and every recruit in the graduating class,” said Forfar. “Every one of you has a desire to help your community, help your neighbours.”

Forfar said firefighting is one of the best jobs in the world but that it doesn't come without its challenges. He said people will feel safe just by a firefighter's presence and that the new recruits should never underestimate the power of talking to people when they are out on the job.

Forfar stressed the importance of continuing to learn and train as a firefighter. He also reminded the firefighters that they're like superheroes to kids and the knowledge they share with kids may one day save their life.

“Not every day will offer you the opportunity to save someone's life, but every single day will offer you the opportunity to affect someone's life,” said Forfar. “Always remember the profession you represent.”

Nicole French is one of the 19 new volunteer firefighters that graduated on July 17. She gave remarks to the audience on behalf of the entire recruit class.

French said it's an honour to join such an amazing fire department and she's grateful for the chance to serve the Caledon community. She said the recruit class would not have been able to graduate were it not for the sacrifices of their family and friends. French also thanked all the training officers and members of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services who helped prepare the recruits for graduation.

French said each recruit brought a unique set of skills to the class and it was great to get to know each person. From studying together, to completing live fire training, to chatting over lunch, she said the recruit class became fast friends.

French ended her speech by giving herself and her fellow recruits three challenges.

“Stay humble, always continue to learn and train, and never lose sight of why you chose to join the fire service,” said French. “I wish you every success in your personal, professional and firefighting careers. All the best, stay safe, and good luck.”

In a media release sent out the day after the graduation ceremony, Groves said new volunteer firefighters are always a welcome sight for Caledon.

“Maintaining a steady stream of well-trained first responders is vital to ensuring we provide emergency services to our residents, and I'm pleased to welcome them to our team,” said Groves.