

# PASTOR RAY VANDER KOOIJ HONOURED AT ACTON CITIZEN OF THE YEAR DINNER

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Family, friends and community members gathered at the Acton Town Hall Centre on Oct. 16 to honour Pastor Ray Vander Kooij - the man who many punnily refer to as their "Ray of light."

Vander Kooij, the pastor of Bethel Church in Acton, has been working at making an impact in his community through spearheading the housing task force of the Community Support Network over the past few years, while also being a member of the Acton Together Committee, Bethel Church's Vacation Bible School and the Community Acton Initiative Refugee Sponsorship (CAIRS) team.

Two plaques were pre-

sented to Vander Kooij by Rotarian and Citizen of the Year co-ordinator Nancy Wilkes, on behalf of MP Michael Chong and MPP Ted Arnott.

These presentations were followed by speeches by Halton Region Chair Gary Carr, Mayor Rick Bonnette, Community Support Network's Sue Lawrenson, Forward Church's pastor of student ministries Andrew Nunn and CAIRS team chair Keith Black.

Catherine O'Hara, managing editor of the Independent, was also in attendance, to present Vander Kooij with a framed copy of a recent article written about his work and life.

Vander Kooij delivered his closing speech thanking all those who have been by his side, working with him and supporting him along the way, with a special mention to both his father and his wife, who were sitting in the crowd that evening.

"No one succeeds alone," he said.



Keith Black presents Vander Kooij with a lantern, representing the light he brings to the community.

Veronica Appia/Metroland

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