

2023 Winners of Lennon/Cullen Scholarship Announced

September 27, 2023

[Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto](#)

Two dedicated young people with a demonstrated commitment to improving the lives of people on the margins are the recipients of this year's Father Paul Lennon|Doreen Cullen Social Work Scholarship from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto. (CCAT).

Recipient Ronald Perinpanayagam is entering his second year of the online Master of Social Work program at the University of Windsor, while Carmen Underwood is entering the first year of the same program. Each is well acquainted with the Catholic Charities community, as Mr. Perinpanayagam is a Clinical Resource Coordinator with the Adult Day Program at Providence Healthcare in Toronto, and Ms. Underwood works for the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub-Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County in Midland.

The two received their awards during Catholic Charities Week, which always coincides with the feast of our patron saint, St. Vincent de Paul. Ronald was able to attend the celebratory Mass and reception on Wednesday, September 27, to receive his scholarship in person.

"We are delighted to recognize Carmen and Ronald's commitment to serving others," says CCAT Executive Director Dr. Agnes Thomas. "When we encounter young people who appreciate the vocation of social work and take steps to advance their skills, it helps us remain confident about the future and the wellbeing of our community. We are blessed to work with such wonderful young people."

Ronald's areas of focus include end-of-life care, gerontology, and social services management. His ample volunteer experience includes time at Journey Home Hospice in Toronto, supporting funeral planning and next-of-kin notification, as well as serving as a mission assistant with the Department of Family Medicine and Cardiology at McMaster University, where he helped with feeding, personal care, and recreation.

"It is important to me to work in a role that helps people flourish and receive necessary care," he wrote in his application. "Working in Catholic social services is significant to me because I share our Catholic mission to increase access to basic needs for our most vulnerable neighbours."

Carmen's equally impressive resume includes volunteer experiences such as helping members of the North Simcoe Rotaract Club in Midland plan activities and completing a placement with Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County, where she helped with intake service.

In her application essay, Carmen stressed that "as human beings, we need to work together and have supports accessible to everyone who values human dignity, respect, equity, and social justice."

A supporting letter for Carmen noted that "clients appreciate her sincerity, authenticity, and approachability, and her actions always align specifically with the teachings of solidarity, working for the common good and preferential treatment for the poor."

One of the letters sent in support of Ronald's application noted that he has "a natural charisma which attracts, inspires and supports confidence in people of varying age groups and developmental stages."

The [Fr. Paul Lennon/Doreen Cullan Social Work Scholarship](#) was established in 2013 on the occasion of CCAT's 100th anniversary to [honour Fr. Lennon and Ms. Cullan](#), two social workers and former executive directors of Catholic Charities whose wisdom and vision helped shape CCAT today. Funded entirely by generous donations to the scholarship, the Lennon/Cullan award is given annually to students in a degree-granting Social Work or diploma-granting Social Services program in a Canadian college/university accredited by a recognized accrediting agency. While preference is given to applicants who are graduates of the Catholic school system in the Archdiocese of Toronto, it is open to all applicants entering into their 2nd year of study or beyond. Applicants are expected to make a commitment to pursuing a career in social work and demonstrate a commitment to working for a social service agency through their volunteer or work experiences.

For more details on how to apply, please check our website: [Scholarship Eligibility](#).

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