

## Library in partnership to help students volunteer

By Bill Rea

Caledon Public Library, along with Volunteer MBC and Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School, have joined to help local youths find opportunities to volunteer.

The program, which was launched yesterday (Wednesday) at the Caledon East branch of the public Library (housed at Robert F. Hall), will see Shan Abbasi, volunteer coordinator Volunteer MBC, there the second and fourth Friday of every month, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. he will be talking to students about volunteer opportunities in the community.

Several dignitaries, including Mayor Allan Thompson, were on hand for the launch.

Tom Wisnicki, principal at Robert F. Hall, observed students are required to put in volunteer hours in order to graduate. But he also told the students on hand for the launch that they should keep it up later in life, as it enriches lives.

He said Caledon is a community that has a lot of volunteers offering support for various activities, and those supports are recognized, more than is the case in an urban area.

"I can tell you that you're not going to get the Mayor of Toronto to come out to your local high school for an event like this," he said. Caledon Public Library CEO and Chief Librarian Colleen Lipp said she was happy the Library is partnering with the school and Volunteer MBC.

She said the role of the Library is to build and enhance connections, adding there are a number of ways to do it.

"Creating connections is one of the most important things we do," she declared. "I hope you will take full advantage of the connection opportunities that are provided here."

Volunteer MBC Executive Director Carine Strong expressed her thanks to the school and Library, as well as Thompson.

"They have been absolutely wonderful to work with," she declared.

Strong reflected that it's not always easy for people to connect with organizations to which they would like to contribute. She said Abbasi will be available to help find ways for them to contribute in ways they will feel passionate about.

"There are many, many different ways that you can give back," she remarked.

While students do need to compile 40 hours of community service in order to graduate from high school, Strong said the hope is to expand on that and make life-long volunteering second nature.

Thompson agreed.

"It's about serving and helping others," he commented.

Thompson added he grew up volunteering, noting many people get into the habit, through their church, community, etc.

He also pointed out there are scholarships available for students who accumulate a lot of volunteer hours.

"Check it out," he said. "There are rewards coming out of this."

The Mayor pointed to the volunteer efforts of Special Olympian Jason Scorgia, and the work he has done to help his cause and the satisfaction he has taken from it.

Scorgia told the students it was his grandmother who first introduced him to volunteering, and he pointed to all the others in the community, like police and fire fighters, who offer their time.

Chris Tampin, director of Jason's Quest, the non-profit charitable agency that promotes Scorgia's work with Special Olympics, etc., commented on how impressed he is with his efforts. He said Scorgia is out to about 100 events per year.

"The list is endless," he declared.

"It's a rewarding," Tampin added. "He's dramatically changed my life."