

Community stepped up to help the less fortunate

By Bill Rea

Caledon is a community that has a reputation for helping the less fortunate in times of need, and that was demonstrated yet again over the holidays.

Schools, businesses, community organizations, etc. made contributions to help those who were struggling.

Once again, Caledon Community Services (CCS) was collecting food and toys for area families through its annual Santa Fund.

The contributions packed one of the rooms at the Exchange in Bolton before they were distributed.

Michelle Veinot, director of community resources for CCS, said the response from the community this year had been excellent.

"There is tons here," she declared, adding the contributions were to go to 180 families, which included 260 children.

"It provides some real support for families," Employment Specialist Nicole Dumanski added.

Caledon OPP were on deck again this year. Several local schools collected food and toys for CCS, and police visited the schools and allowed the students to cram police cruisers for delivery to Exchange.

Police report they delivered 7,186 pounds of food and \$4,930 worth of toys that were collected from the schools.

Alloa Public School was among the schools that helped cram cruisers. In addition, Office Assistant Danielle Araujo said the staff and students also took part in a food drive and Mitten Tree in support of Peel Outreach.

Alton Public School Principal Laurie Johnson said students there helped cram cruisers.

She added the students took part in a winter coat and hat drive, and she was pretty impressed with what they accomplished. They collected 79 coats, four pairs of boots and about 150 hats and pairs of mittens.

She also said Grade 1 and 2 students made a trip to the seniors at Pinnacle View to serve cookies and sing for the residents.

Belfountain Public School students did their bit to cram cruisers, according to Principal Lynn Bristol.

They also supported a Peel family, consisting of a single mother and two youngsters through Share the Joy. The students also sold Rasikis bracelets through Me to We to support projects in Africa.

Students at Caledon Central Public School raised about \$800 from bracelet sales through Me to We, teacher Pamela Mauti said. She added they also supported a single mother with nine children through Share the Joy.

Caledon East Public School was another place where the students crammed cruiser.

"We've got a hallway full of food," Office Manager Jenny Borrelli observed in the days leading up to the items being collected.

Students at Ellwood Memorial Public School prepared shoeboxes in support of women in shelters, Principal Andrew Greenhow reported. Led by the members of the Me to We club, they filled about 50 boxes.

It took five police cruisers to haul away all the contributions from Herb Campbell Public School, but Principal Tina Middlebrook said there was more.

The school also held a Candy Cane Toy Drive, as well as supporting a family through Share the Joy.

"We lined the whole hallway outside my office with gifts for the family," she declared. "It was spectacular."

James Bolton Public School took part in collecting food to help the efforts of CCS, Principal Laurie Allison reported. They also assisted in supporting the Breakfast Club at another school in Peel, as well as collecting gently used coats and boots for another school.

The community at Macville Public School had a number of activities going on of a charitable nature, according to Principal Kelly Kawabe. They included taking part in the Cram the Cruiser program, as well as sponsoring a family through Share the Joy. They also sold bracelets through Me to We, and the school has a mat-making club to send mats overseas.

A lot of the charitable efforts at Palgrave Public School during the year are in support of Sleeping Children Around the World, according to Office Manager Lisa Gilbert. But she said students at the school did take part in the Cram the Cruiser program.

"Cram the Cruiser was a huge success this year," she declared.

Staff and students at St. John Paul II Catholic Elementary School helped support the food drive for CCS, as well as supporting other causes throughout the year, according to Assistant Secretary Linda Giancola.

The community at St. John the Baptist Elementary School in Bolton supported both the food and pyjama drives for CCS, Assistant Secretary Rachel Caruso reported.

St. Nicholas Elementary School also supported CCS, collecting food, toys, hats, mitts and scarves, according to Principals Anna D'Agostino.

There were police cruisers being crammed at Allan Drive Middle School, according to Secretary Vera Canosa. She added students collected items to fill shoeboxes for women and children in shelters.

Students at Southfields Village Public School took part in Ten Days of Holiday Cheer, which teacher Michelle Carr said was run by the Student Parliament. Students were asked to bring in one associated item for a particular day, such as dental day, new book day, toy day, etc. She said it took two cars to transport the roughly 30 boxes of items to Peel Children's Centre in Mississauga.

"We do initiatives throughout the whole school year," she added.

The community at Holy Family Elementary School in Bolton helped collect breakfast and snack items for another school's breakfast program, Principal Velia Viola said. She added there was a Giving Tree, which students could take ornaments with information of a child to buy a gift for. The school also hosted a Market Place in December, and student sold crafts they made, raising \$380.60 for ShareLife.

Students at St. Cornelius Elementary School were out one morning helping to cram cruisers, teacher Arlene Coward reported. She also said staff at the school held a food drive, as well as candy cane drive to support Third World causes.

James Grieve Public School took part in the Cram the Cruiser program, Vice-Principal Jozanne Walker-Battick said. She also said there was a Giving Tree at the school, with hats and mitts being used as ornaments, and they went to CCS.

King's College School in Albion sponsored two families in Peel, teacher Bob Mitchner reported.

There were a number of projects going on at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Bolton, Chaplain Tania Vincent reported. She said the school ran a toy drive for the hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Students were also selling cookies in support of Ronald McDonald House. There were also fund-raising efforts to help families within the school community.

The activities at Robert. F. Hall included a sock drive. Chaplain Brenda Holtkamp said the result was 8,760 pairs of socks that were sent to the Good Shepherd Centre in Toronto. As well, she said there was a food drive for the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, along with a Christmas gift drive for the Choices Youth Shelter in Orangeville.

Humberview Secondary School Principal Sue Fried reported staff and students were involved in a clothing drive and fashion show to support Evolve, as well as a food drive and basketball buy-in for The Exchange in Bolton. They also made Christmas center pieces for a Rotary Seniors' Dinner and made donations through the Samaritan's purse.



Donna Cragg, director of Communication and Marketing with CCS, Employment Specialist Nicole Dumanski and Director of Community Resources Michelle Veinot were in the middle of much of the contributions that had been gathered at the Exchange to help people over the holidays. Photo by Bill Rea



The food program at Caledon Community Servicers (CCS) received a boost in December from the Caledon Lions Club. Club Secretary David Cunningham was at the Exchange in Bolton to present the \$1,000 contribution to Michelle Veinot, director of community resources for CCS. Photo by Bill Rea



Representatives from Rowland Investments and Insurance Inc. had a whole carload of contributions to drop off at the Exchange recently to go toward helping the less fortunate. The contribution was to be matched, dollar-for-dollar, by product partner Manulife Financial. Jim, Bente and Jennifer Rowland and Kim Bolosnese presented the contribution to Kim D'Eri, manager of community animation with CCS. Photo by Bill Rea



Caledon OPP Constables Ryan Sage and Constable Christina Sanghera were on hand to help Allan Drive Middle School students cram cruisers recently.



Students at Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School collected 8,760 pairs of socks for the Good Shepherd Centre. Photo by Bill Rea