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Crowds follow the sun as Davis Farms raises $14,000 for celiac

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Davis Feed and Farm Supply Ltd. became a tourist attraction for three weeks with their sunflowers, and successfully raised $14,000 for the Canadian Celiac Association (CCA).

With the more consistent warm and beautiful weather this summer, many in the GTA took to the country for some sight seeing, chief among them being the one-million sunflowers that grow on the Davis family farm.

?When we set out to open this experience for everyone, we didn't think those numbers were going to happen here,? says Sean Davis, whose family has been growing sunflowers on the farm for a decade now.

Over the civic long weekend alone, some 8'000 sunflower lovers came by to walk around and take a ?sunflower selfie.'

In total, some 18,000 people visited the farm for the three weeks when the sunflowers were in bloom.

The sunflowers didn't just brighten up people's days, but have been used by the farm as a business venture, for sunflower honey, and recently sunflower oil. There are now 21 hives on the farm, consisting of around 1.2 million pollinator bees.

Admission fee was $5 per person, kids were free, and a dollar for every admission went to the CCA. Mr. Davis explained they chose to donate to the association because his son is diagnosed with celiac.

?It took us about eight months to figure out what was wrong with him,? he says, and discovered that he also carries it. ?It's been a pretty close part of our lives.?

Celiac disease is a long-term autoimmune disorder that primarily affects the small intestine, and the only known effective treatment is a strict lifelong gluten-free diet.

Mr. Davis says that dealing with the large amount of people was overwhelming at times and they were nervous on how to deal with so many visitors. They even had to turn people away because there was not enough space to park cars.

?Some of them were coming to the farm for the first time, and some of them have been here before and had more specific questions about sunflower.?

He added that the best feeling was seeing how happy people were and enjoyed their time, and donating to a worthy cause while providing a beautiful view for tourists.

Mr. Davis says that for the most part everyone was respectful, and though the sunflower fields are now closed for the season, they are looking to do it again next year.