

Caledon Meals on Wheels in search of new meal supplier

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been families and seniors who have struggled to keep their bellies full.

Caledon Meals on Wheels has stepped up in a big way in recent months to ensure the needs of our community are met during this difficult time.

"With the support of our wonderful community, Caledon Meals on Wheels has been able to expand our range of services to help seniors and people with disabilities in our community," said Executive Director, Christine Sevigny. "Our hot and frozen meals continue to grow and with the addition of the grocery delivery program, we are reaching new people who are struggling to get to the grocery stores or for safety reasons, are trying to reduce their trips."

CMOW introduced their new grocery delivery program, 'Wee Care Grocery Pack' on (April 13) which delivers necessary goods by staff members and volunteers for seniors and persons with disabilities who are at home to keep themselves safe from the virus.

Since the beginning of the year, CMOW has donated over 1,300 meals, hot and frozen, to local residents. On top of that, the local organization has provided 190 grocery packs to those who are struggling financially.

"We can only do this through the generous support of individual and business donors in Caledon, including the Bolton Tim Horton's Match Our Meals donation during the holiday season. We are also so grateful for the additional COVID-19 emergency support funds from the Region of Peel, United Way of Greater Toronto, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley and the Humeniuk Foundation, who have helped us sustain and grow our services to meet the needs of our community," said Sevigny.

But CMOW is always looking for more support. As a non-profit organization, CMOW relies on donations and funding to keep their doors open and services available.

Sevigny says there are ways for the community to support CMOW by sharing, by way of word of mouth to neighbours, friends, co-workers, information about the organization to get their services into the hands of those who need it.

"We are always looking for ways to reach out to seniors and people with disabilities in our community who may need support and are not connected to any other services. By reaching out to neighbours, friends and family and helping them to connect with Caledon Meals on Wheels, or any of the great agencies doing work in the community, our community can make an even larger impact in the lives of those most vulnerable during COVID-19," she said.

Like most charitable organizations and businesses across the community, events have been cancelled to flatten the curve of the coronavirus, instead transitioning to the virtual world to keep residents informed and involved.

CMOW has organized a virtual 'Get Fit' fundraiser in association with North Hockey and MVS Design to raise funds for CMOW and allow residents to showcase how they have been keeping fit while at home.

Alongside raising funds for the organization, CMOW is in need of a new hot meals supplier to begin in September of this year.

"We are looking for both 'traditional' suppliers and non-traditional opportunities who could prepare hot nutritious meals Monday to Friday for seniors, people with disabilities and/or those recovering from illness/ surgery living in Caledon and surrounding areas," explained Sevigny. "Our main goal is to offer a variety of nutritionally balanced, healthy and flavourful meals Monday to Friday. Our meals need to meet the diverse dietary needs of our clients at a cost that is affordable."

A portion of the cost of each meal is subsidized to CMOW, as they are working on a strict budget, so they're looking for a partnership that meets their traditional and non-traditional criteria, as well as being as flexible to work within their current budget.

?We are confident however that we can find a community partner who can work within our budget to provide this essential service to our community. CMOW has been around for over 36 years, our clients are changing, our community is growing, so we are looking for a partnership that will continue to grow and develop along with us,? said Sevigny. ?We are looking at all options, from having a single supplier to multiple suppliers, or a partner who might have some space we could use to cook our own meals.?

She added, ?Our world has changed, and the impact of COVID-19 on our local businesses and service organizations has been tremendous, so we want to look at all possibilities. Our current supplier has committed to us for the next few months, so we would like to make the full transition for September 2020. To allow for ease of delivery by our volunteers and for logistical reasons, we ideally would like to be located in the Bolton area. Most importantly, we are looking for something sustainable and long term. We have always had such great support from our community and thought why not cast our net out far and wide and see what happens.?

Anyone interested in becoming a hot meal supplier for the Caledon Meals on Wheels can contact Client and Volunteer Services Supervisor, Kim Pridham at (905) 857-7651 or kim.pridham@cmow.org. For more information about CMOW, please visit cmow.org.