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Local resident starts ?Adopt a Grandparent or Health Care Worker? program

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A local resident has organized a new initiative to make the festive holidays a little extra special for seniors and health care workers.

Vanessa DesLaurier created the ?Adopt a Grandparent or Health Care Worker' project, wanting to pay it forward this upcoming Christmas by giving members of the community an opportunity to give back to senior residents and healthcare workers at King Nursing Home.

DesLaurier wasn't able to keep close to her grandparents, especially during the holidays and understands the importance of making the holidays special for those who aren't likely to be close to family.

With the COVID-19 pandemic likely to keep families apart this holiday season, Christmas time will be hard on several families whose grandparents won't be with them.

?Both my grandmothers did not live close to me. And I depend on the generosity of others, so I would like to pay it forward.? she said.

Additionally, she, like most people these days, appreciate the hard work the healthcare workers have put in in recent months to help others, and feels like they deserve the same amount of care.

?Healthcare workers are superheroes and I appreciate them,? said DesLaurier. ?My mom worked in a hospital (in Halifax, Nova Scotia) until she retired about eight years ago. My grandmother also worked in a hospital until she retired, and my cousin, also worked in the hospitals, but now works with people with mental health issues and she is so kind and generous.?

Though this is the first year she is officially hosting the project, she's hoping to continue annually with the help of the community.

She launched the initiative on Nov. 1 and it is planning to end it at the end of the month. Gifts will be delivered the second or third week of December, so if any community members wish to donate, she will accept until then.

?Funny part is I didn't expect anything at all, as I plan on donating gifts anyways and I know people have their favorite charity and organization, as people have been pretty amazing this year! But people are sending me donations and telling me their stories and I am asking them to give me wording for their note to a resident and healthcare worker and I am so touched,? she explained.

DesLaurier reached out to King Nursing Home in Bolton in hopes to get all 72 residents involved as well as all staff members.

?This is a great project especially during this pandemic when the residents are indoors and cannot participate in the regular activities they did prior to the pandemic. Residents will have a little more to look forward too during the holiday season,? said Director of Resident and Family Relations at King Nursing Home, Dalbir Khattra. ?In addition, it shows the residents that the community is thinking of them during this tough time.?

She added, ?it's a great initiative!?