

It's That Time of Year

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Time flies, snow flies, thankfully actual flies have all but disappeared due to the cold (the only advantage of winter if you ask me) and here we are closing in fast on December 2021, another year virtually no one predicted would be spent under the daunting cloud that is still COVID-19. But I'm determined to be happy today because while time seems to pass by faster and faster as I age, the fact that we've made it through another challenging year is reason enough to celebrate. Yup the headline might not be all that original, but it's that time of year when the Caledon community embraces the holiday season and everything that truly represents.

I'm not talking about difficult and possibly divisive issues like faith when I say, it's that time of year. Rather, I'm referring to the overall generosity of spirit that seems to embrace so many of us regardless of what faith, or lack thereof, we celebrate. Instead, today is an opportunity to share all of the good things that are happening locally, and a gentle reminder that if you are able to then please be of good cheer this holiday season and donate to a charity of your choice for those who ARE still struggling; for as Charles Dickens wrote in 1843, because it is a time, of all others, when WANTS are keenly felt.

As we all go about our business this holiday season, and look forward to finally being able to celebrate with family and friends, I ask that you keep in mind those who could use a little helping hand.

Just this past week, someone in my neighbourhood was celebrating the birthday of Guru Nanak Jiv Di (the founder of the Sikh faith) by handing out warm winter hats to honour his teaching about the importance of sharing with others. Caledon Community Services is hosting its Annual Gala on December 4th - Literally Still Home For The Holidays - with all ticket sales and sponsorship supports going to provide the many services CCS offers to our community ALL YEAR LONG. If you'd like to support, you can still purchase tickets online. While visiting The Exchange this past week, a local hockey team had collected an abundance of food to stock the pantry and we know local schools have also collected donations and with the help of Fines Ford, delivered them too.

In every small village, town and community that together makes Caledon well, Caledon, community leaders and service organizations are gathering to host drive by parades, toy drives and food drives along with Christmas markets, fundraisers and tree lighting ceremonies. November 29 will see a tree lighting in Valleywood, December 3 one in Bolton, along with a market and on December 4 parades, galas and Christmas markets abound! December 5th will see another tree lighting, this one in Caledon East, and on December 10-12, Cambium Farms, in partnership with the Bethell Hospice Foundation, another market will be taking place benefitting the work that Bethell Hospice does. What's beautiful about many of these events is that they are being organized by hard working, committed, and caring community volunteers who are demonstrating the true meaning of the Christmas spirit.

We know that COVID restrictions are still in place at some agencies, making in-person events like serving food to the homeless challenging. However, there are a number of ways you can still help out with all protocols in place including: packing hampers, delivering hampers and/or gifts to local families, or conducting your own food, toy or warm winter clothing drives and then arranging deliveries of the collected items. It's always best to contact the folks for whom you wish to collect items to verify what is most needed.

In Orangeville, Family Transition Place is accepting food and financial donations (with Covid restrictions in place) and clothing donations are directed through two local stores. Again, call ahead but most organizations will also tell you that gift cards from local stores are a great way to give back to community and allow for families to purchase for themselves the gifts and most needed items for their children. Financial donations also allow social service agencies to maximize donor dollars by giving them bulk order purchasing power.

It is indeed that time of year. If you can, please help to spread some Christmas cheer in your community. Caledon is a beautiful place to live, work and play but it can be challenging too. Let's all work together to ensure that before the real snow starts to fly our whole community is clothed, fed, warm and dry.