

Another successful season celebrated for HomeJames program

By Bill Rea

Just as it was meant to do, HomeJames got a lot of people home safe over the holidays, and the volunteers had a lot of fun doing it. HomeJames is a service that sends out teams of three to get people who might have had too much to drink during holiday festivities, along with their vehicles and passengers, home, with no charge.

It was the time to acknowledge the volunteers recently with a reception at Humberview Secondary School.

"We had another good year," commented Stan Janes, president of the local HomeJames chapter. "We had a lot of fun out there."

He also had a surprise announcement that he and Vice-President of Operations Diane Tolstoy will be stepping down from their positions, but will still be involved with the program.

HomeJames Caledon Chairman Tayler Parnaby observed the crowd of volunteers out for the reception spoke to the effectiveness of the program.

During evenings when the program was operating (Friday and Saturday nights during the holidays, along with New Year's Eve), Parnaby said there were no serious accidents in Caledon that could be attributed to alcohol.

"That fact alone speaks to the legitimacy of your efforts," he said.

Harsh weather conditions put the program on hold for one night. But the evenings that it went ahead saw 145 volunteers put in more than 3,598 hours. There were 150 teams that provided 326 rides that helped 800 people get home safe. The effort covered some 9,800 kilometres.

"It's a remarkable, remarkable total," Parnaby declared. "Congratulations. You've done a terrific job."

"You've made Caledon a lot safer," Dufferin Caledon MP David Tilson told the audience, on behalf of the federal government.

"Thank you for making Caledon safe."

Mayor Marolyn Morrison was also appreciative of the volunteer effort, which she and her husband John contributed to. She pointed out many of the volunteers put in seven shifts.

"You must be night owls," she remarked, adding she got home shortly before 4 a.m. from her shift.

Morrison has volunteered in the past, but she said this was her first year actually going on the road as part of a team. "We had so much fun," she declared.

The Mayor was appreciative of the work of all the volunteers "You make such a difference in our community," she said.

"It is the volunteers that make the program successful," observed Inspector Tim Melanson, detachment commander at Caledon OPP.

Janes expressed his thanks for all the support the program has received. "It's saving lives that make it worthwhile," he commented.

There was also a lot of corporate support, including from Tim Hortons, as well as the local car dealers that supplied the shuttle vehicles.

"We got the chance to drive some of these new cars," Janes commented.

He added no other campaign in Ontario had all the local dealers supplying vehicles.

"That's amazing," he declared.



HomeJames Caledon Chairman Tayler Parnaby was on stage at the recognition evening, accompanied by the HomeJames Mascot, Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tillson, Mayor Marolyn Morrison, Caledon OPP Inspector Tim Melanson, local HomeJames chapter president Stan Janes and Vice-President of Operations Diane Tolstoy.



Diane Sawyer was recognized for the 14 nights she put in for HomeJames over the holidays.



Albion singer Andie Trépanier provided music for the evening, accompanied by Scott Hunter on bass and Kevin Stolz on piano.