

Bolton community hike and BBQ set for this Sunday, free of charge

By Rob Paul

This Sunday, October 3, there will be a hike on the Caledon Trails of the Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association led by Gruppo Alpini Autonomo Vaughan with a BBQ to follow.

The hike will take residents through old Caledon and some historical sites as the Alpini guide hikers through history of a lost community full of old buildings and structures.

Hiking registration will take place at the Duffy's Lane entrance at Edelweiss Park (320 Glasgow Road, Bolton) at 9:30 a.m. with the excursion set for 10 a.m. Everyone in the community is invited to take part in the hike.

To accommodate those who might not want to walk the entire 10 kilometres, there will be a shuttle at both the four- and six-kilometre mark to take hikers back to the refreshment and BBQ area.

The hike is sponsored by Councillor Annette Groves and the Bolton Village Residence Association in collaboration with the Alpini to give Caledon residents a reason to get out for some community exploration and socialization at the BBQ.

'We do work with seniors and the other thing we do is physical excursions that are geared to seniors, families, and the whole community,' said Bruno Vecchio, Alpini member and Bolton resident. 'In this particular case, on October 3, through the Caledon Trails we're putting together a three-tier hike free for anyone who wants to participate. The Alpini will be there to assist in any way with the intention to promote wellness, exercise, culture, community, and family. For the seniors who can't participate in the walk, while they're waiting for those on the walk there will be a light exercise program taking place during the excursion at the Edelweiss Park. They're called sitting exercises and it's a very light exercise program for them to do. Then, after it's all said and done around noon, the Alpini will be doing a BBQ with hotdogs, sausages, pasta, just a nice refreshing lunch at no charge and we'll have an accordion player there.'

Having the hike sponsored by Groves and the Bolton Village Residence Association allowed the Alpini to provide the entire event free of charge, and Vecchio is so happy to have such strong community leaders in Bolton.

'The wonderful thing about this was when we were looking for sponsorship, Regional Councillor Annette Groves found out about it and basically said, 'if it's promoting culture, community, and seniors, then I want to be a part of it.' So, through Annette Groves and the Bolton Village Residence Association, they've put together the sponsorship to provide the food, the water, and all the things we would have had to buy for this event. It was a really cool thing for them to do. One of the mandates of the Bolton Village Residence Association is to keep community together in Bolton so they stepped up. I only approached Annette and the Bolton Village Residence Association about a week-and-a-half ago and in that little time they were able to solidify everything that was required and that shocked me completely.'

The Alpini have made it a focus to be there for seniors in their communities and the hike is just another way for them to help bring people together, especially during a time that hasn't been easy for anyone.

'The Alpini are an Italian culture group,' said Vecchio. 'Basically, it's gentlemen from Italy who served in the army in the Alpini corps and they have a chapter in Vaughan. Because Bolton doesn't have an Alpini chapter, Vaughan takes us on as their brothers. These fellas are community oriented, and this particular group is extremely involved in wellness for seniors. Right now, what they're doing a program on Thursday afternoons and Thursday evenings where they're teaching seniors how to use iPads in order to communicate during the pandemic?it's actually sponsored in part by the Government of Canada through the New Horizons for Seniors Program. These guys are very involved in community, seniors, and family.'

The ideal day came to Rucchio just by hiking the trails with his own family, which is why the ideal outcome in his eyes is to get seniors out with their families to enjoy both the natural and social beauty of the community.

“The intention is to bring the culture, community, seniors, and everyone together,” he said. “It’s not for just a select group; we want everyone from the community to come and enjoy. It all started with the Alpini because we do this, and I said why don’t we do it in the trails of Caledon after my wife and I were walking through them. When I asked them, they said for sure. There wasn’t any magic sauce, it was just about helping community. My biggest hope is grandparents come with their kids, grandkids, and great-grand kids—that would be the greatest thing.”