

Caledon Seniors Centre continues fundraising efforts to prevent social isolation among seniors

By Riley Murphy

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The Caledon Senior Centre's purpose is to relieve loneliness and isolation of the aged by establishing, operating and maintaining a senior citizens centre to provide recreation, education and other programs for senior citizens.

Caledon Seniors Centre is a not-for-profit organization independent of the Town of Caledon that offers recreational programs for health and wellness for Caledon residents that are 55 plus.

But all of this is not possible without fundraising efforts and community support.

RaDeana Montgomery, fundraising coordinator for CSC, shared that they are actively trying to raise \$100,000 to offset the cost for all the seniors in Caledon.

With the funds raised, not only can they continue offering programs, but they can also do so at a reduced cost to seniors.

Many of the current programs only cost seniors around \$4 to attend.

Fundraising allows accessibility to all seniors to be able to access this environment and partake in all the different things that we offer here, says Montgomery.

The Centre has its central location in Bolton, and six satellite locations around Caledon to ensure they are where the community needs them to be, allowing seniors access to these programs in their local area.

They offer numerous programs throughout the week, including bingo, shuffleboard, dance classes, golf, and more.

Their programs are suited to every range of abilities.

In addition to this, there are also educational opportunities.

This includes their various lunch and learns, Tech 101 courses, and guest speakers.

Montgomery says these educational aspects also allow them to connect members with different organizations to what they might need.

The Centre also has a therapy room on site.

Many of the volunteers at the Centre are also those who use the services themselves.

Suzanne McAndie has been at the Centre since 2018, both as a member and a volunteer.

She primarily volunteers in the kitchen when she's not taking in bingo.

McAndie says she's currently living on her own, and through the Centre, she's been able to meet so many people.

She says not only is her time there rewarding, but also filled with fun.

Jane is another volunteer and member at CSC, having been a part of the organization for more than five years.

She says the Centre to her is her "home away from home."

Judy has been a member of the Centre for more than five years as well, but joined as a volunteer in recent years. She says that the Centre gives her a place of belonging, and she loves the opportunity to meet new people.

It also allows her to keep both busy and active.

Montgomery says the Centre gives some members a "second life."

"That's so vitally important," says Montgomery. "And that's why these places are so important, because not only do they keep people healthy and active, but for some who just want to volunteer, it gives them something to do."

"We have so much to offer them, and they have so much to offer us," she says. "Sometimes I think about some of these seniors that are sitting alone at home that maybe don't know we're here, or maybe don't know what we are, and they're afraid. I wish that there was a way to reach them, and hopefully we can, to explain what it is we do here, and this is an opportunity for them to still be an active member of society, and give them something," she says.

She shared at times it can be difficult as there are many misconceptions about what the Centre does.

Montgomery says that many believe that the Centre is a retirement or nursing home, which can make fundraising and outreach a challenge.

As they celebrate their 30th year, she says this is an extremely important time.

By 2026, the number of residents aged 55 and above in Caledon is projected to grow significantly, and as the population grows, so does the need for accessible, inclusive, and engaging services.

The Centre shares that, with their small team of staff and volunteers, they will struggle to meet the needs of older adults without expanded resources, risking increased social isolation, reduced mobility, and a diminished quality of life.

As November approaches, numerous fundraisers will be held to support the Centre.

The first is their Country Hoedown on October 24, which includes line dancing, a live band, and a barbecue dinner.

Following that will be their holiday portraits on November 1, the annual craft/bake sale and silent auction on November 8, paint night on November 14, Build a Gnome on November 18, and wrapping up November will be their 30th anniversary celebration from November 28 to 30.

The annual craft/bake sale, along with the silent auction, is one of their most significant fundraising events of the year.

It will feature 28 vendors, offering various items for sale, including poinsettias and MacGregor's Meat, as well as their Angel Tree fundraiser, where attendees can purchase personalized angels to hang on the tree.

The silent auction will feature donated items from the community, which they are actively looking for.

These fundraising events are open to the entire community, not just members and seniors.

Their 30th anniversary will celebrate decades of memories, marking where they began and where they're headed.

Montgomery says the Centre also welcomes third-party fundraising from the community to help raise funds.