

Coldest Night of the Year teams blown away by community support

By Rob Paul

For the third consecutive year the Caledon community will be participating in the Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser, facilitated by Caledon Community Services. It's a fundraising walk for local charities to raise money for the hurt, hungry, and homeless and over 200 communities across Canada participate.

This year's walk will be virtual due to COVID-19 but is set for February 26 with 35 teams made up of 170 registered walkers.

CCS initially set the fundraising goal at \$50,000 but quickly surpassed it and set the new goal at \$75,000?they've surpassed that goal as well with \$78,914 raised.

14 teams have raised over \$1,000 for Coldest Night of the Year, including ?Keep On Moving,? a team participating for the second year in a row and captained by Caledon resident Karen Schultz.

?We joined last year, I asked a few of the ladies that I work with if they'd mind joining me,? said Schultz. ?We all love to walk and be active and we all live in the community. We all care very much about our area and decided it would be good to give back to the community. We created this little team and we've had a good time with it. We've reached out to friends and coworkers, and it's given us two things, an ability to give back to the community and an ability to connect with people in a time where it's a little bit strange. COVID sometimes blocks people off but for us this gave us an opportunity to reach out and talk to people and talk about the community. It's turned out well and I'm amazed at how much our team has raised, I'm proud of everyone involved.?

Keep On Moving has raised the second most funds among the 35 teams with \$5,260 and Schultz credits those in the community showing her team support.

?I've lived here in Caledon for just over 25 years and I've seen CCS and other community organizations over the years, and we've always tried to support the community,? said Schultz. ?It does feel good to make a difference in a community, it feels like what you're supposed to do. I was raised to help other people and that's what we're trying to do.?

To change it up this year and make it an even more fun experience for a great cause, Schultz and a few other teammates are considering putting a Canadian winter spin on their walk.

?It's going to be pretty fun, three of us walk together all year round and we're considering snowshoeing it this year if there's enough snow for it,? she said.

A program CCS offers called LIFE for Youth has had a large impact on a younger demographic in the community and the group has decided to walk as a team this year under the name ?Walking for a Better Tomorrow.?

?The LIFE for Youth program helps Caledon youth secure job placement,? said team captain Alexandra Samuels. ?We wanted to bring our team together to show our support to our fellow community members and we really wanted to give back.

?The program helps give job seekers the chance to gain the skills they need and gain confidence for entering the workforce. They've succeeded in securing job placements for all Caledon youth, and they go above and beyond to help youth and get to know them and see what they need to do to improve their skills.?

Walking for a Better Tomorrow has raised \$1,010 and wanted to do even more for the community beyond helping change lives through the LIFE for Youth program.

?We were all part of the LIFE for Youth program, and we decided that we could give back to the community by joining together for this event,? said Samuels. ?We all had individual fundraising goals and talked ideas on the best ways to fundraise and let people know.?

Samuels has been blown away by the community support for Coldest Night of the Year and already sees this as a yearly tradition for the LIFE for Youth program.

?We're really looking forward to it and meeting different people,? she said. ?This is my first time participating in the event because I'm new to the community but it's definitely something I'll be participating in again next year. I really love this community and how everyone at CCS is always available when you need support.?