

Community came out to help less fortunate over holidays

By Bill Rea

The holiday season traditionally brings out the spirit of giving in people, and that's certainly the case when it comes to lending a hand to the less fortunate.

Many businesses agencies and individuals have stepped up to answer the call this year. Many of the fundraising activities have been carried out in support of the efforts of Caledon Community Services (CCS) and the Exchange.

CCS' Chief Executive Officer Monty Laskin reported the fundraising effort continues.

As of Jan. 4, CCS was \$37,968 away from helping all Caledon residents who were seeking warmth and comfort this year.

'The goal for CCS' 33rd annual Santa Fund is \$185,000, the largest target in our history to ensure that CCS can continue to provide services all year long', Laskin said. 'Without a united community effort and the generosity of residents and businesses, we'd be in some trouble. Day-to-day living becomes extremely difficult for many families in Caledon without CCS' support.'

As always, the Santa Fund distributed donations of food and new toys this holiday season. As well, CCS will provide emergency assistance to Caledon families throughout the year.

All Santa Fund financial donations can be made online at www.ccs4u.org or by contacting Nicole Dumanski at 905-584-2300, ext. 236, or at ndumanski@ccs4u.org

Donations to the Santa Fund allow CCS to assist with fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat and poultry; home heating; medical prescriptions; emergency expenses; counselling throughout the year; and much more.

The local schools have been very active in helping the cause.

SouthFields Village Public School was one of several schools in town which saw the collection of non-perishable food items that were collected for the Exchange by Caledon OPP in their Cram the Cruiser program.

Sergeant Marcus Sanders estimated police delivered more than 6,000 pounds of food to the exchange.

As well, the school's Student Parliament led efforts to collect personal care items in support of Peel Children's Aid Society's Holiday Wishes Program.

Students at Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School have been busy as the holidays approached.

Chaplain Brenda Holtkamp commented on the Sock Drive students had run. The target had been to collect 2,020 pairs of socks for the Good Shepherd Mission.

'We surpassed by 1,000, which is pretty amazing,' she remarked.

As well, she said the school ran a food and gift drive, with the proceeds being distributed by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Orangeville throughout the area.

'We'll have lots of items to deliver, which is great,' she declared.

Students at Ellwood Memorial Public School in Bolton collected food items to cram into police cruisers.

As well, teacher Jennifer Caruk said the school's Me To We Club ran a T-shirt drive, and that saw more than 100 items, as well as 26 boxes of food that were sent to CCS.

James Bolton Public School was another source of food being crammed into cruisers.

As well, Vice-Principal Jeremy Taylor said they helped support another school in Peel with their breakfast program. They also collected winter clothing to help students at another school.

Cruisers were also crammed at Alton Public School, according to Principal Tammy King.

'We are doing lots of different things,' she added, commenting that also included collecting food, toys, hats and mittens for Peel Outreach.

Students and staff at Alton Public School were able to come up with more than 500 pounds of food items to cram into cruisers, 'which is pretty cool,' according to Principal Laurie Johnson.

She added Grade 1 and 2 students made cookies for residents at the nearby Pinnacle View Residence, 'One tin for every person who lives in the building.'

Belfountain Public School also had about 500 pounds of goods to fill three cruisers, Office Manager Brenda Smitt reported.

Herb Campbell Public School collected enough items to fill four cruisers.

'That is just amazing,' Vice-Principal Johanne Cornoyer-White declared.

She added the school had a Candy Cane Tree, with students picking a cane and learning details of a child for them to buy a present for.

As well, Herb Campbell 'adopted' for Share the Joy two families in need. Cornoyer-White reported each class wanting to

participate was given one family member with their age/size and wish list.

There was an overwhelming student response to the Helping Hands campaign this year at Macville Public School.

Teacher Lorraine Lapp reported a collection of food, toys, gifts and clothing came in, and was shipped to the Exchange.

As well, Lapp said they ran a Sock Challenge for the first time at the school, with collected pairs of socks going to the Exchange.

The Me To We program was also active at Palgrave Public School.

School Secretary Sylvia Forletta said students collected enough goods to cram four police cruisers. She added the school set up a Christmas tree where students put up donations of mitts and hats for the Exchange.

‘It was beautiful,’ she said.

There was lots of charitable activities going on at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Bolton.

Chaplaincy Leader Urszula Cybulko said some students took part in a Christmas Street Patrol in downtown Toronto, taking warm clothing, sandwiches and hot chocolate (supplied by Tim Hortons in Bolton) to needy people they encountered.

As well, she said students had been assembling Christmas baskets for nine needy families in the community, as well as two other baskets that were sent to Romero House in Toronto to support refugee families. She added hospitality students will be preparing Christmas dinners to go with these baskets.

Cybulko also said some students have put up money to finance Gifts of Life (goats, chickens, etc.) for families in the developing world through Chalice, a Canadian Catholic organization.

In addition, Cybulko said students in the Planning Independence Program made cookies to be sold, with the proceeds going to the hospital for Sick Children. ‘A lot of these kids spent a lot of time at Sick Kids,’ she commented.

Students in the school's drama department assembled shoeboxes filled with useful items to be distributed through Samaritan's Purse.

Students at St. John the Baptist Elementary School in Bolton have been raising money for Project Hope, which supports Syrian refugees, according to school Secretary Louise Grant.

She also the school did a food drive for CCS, and there was a Helping Hands campaign in support of the Hospital for Sick Children. Caledon East Public School was another school that helped cram police cruisers to help the efforts of CCS. Principal Heather Denley also said they had a hat and mitten tree, with the proceeds going to CCS as well. In addition, she said one of the teachers organized students to collect gently-used clothing in support of Syrian refugees.

Students at Credit View Public School created a toy mountain out of contributed toys. Officer Manager Lorna Robinson said they went to the Bread Basket in Georgetown.

Grade 7 and 8 students at St. John Paul II?Elementary School in Bolton adopted a family through the Community Care Access Centre, according Principal George Consitt.

He also said the parent group at the school did a food drive for the Exchange, and also sent some wrapping paper when they learned it was needed for the unwrapped gifts.

‘It's sort of a not-thought-of sort of thing,’ Consitt observed.

He also said some of the older students learned about four schools in Brampton that have struggling families. They learned about them through social workers, and found out what specific items they needed.

‘The community's very generous,’ he said.

Humberview Secondary School put on a concert in support of the local PROBUS club, according to Principal Sue Fried.

She also said members of the school's Interact Club created ‘suspense boxes,’ that were bid on at a Rotary event. Proceeds went to the Interim Place Women's Shelter in Peel.

Members of the Me To We Team at Allan Drive Middle School sold bracelets in support of artists in Kenya, according to Vice-Principal Brenda Gibson.

She also said there was a bake sale, as well as day of silence in support of children around the world who can't speak for themselves. As well, she said the school held a food drive in support of the Exchange and sold Candygrams in support of the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

More than 600 pounds of food were collected at Caledon Central Public School, and that went to CCS, according to teacher Pamela Mauti.

She also said the school ran a winter clothing drive, and 25 bags of gently-used items were delivered to a local clothing depot.

As well, she said the Grade 8 students candy canes, with the money going to assist a local family.



Caledon Community Services (CCS) received a major contribution of donated food items recently at the Exchange. Jim Rowland of Rowland Investments and Insurance Inc. was accompanied by his wife Bente and Julianne Carras in delivering the items to Kim D'Eri, manager of community animation with CCS. Rowland is also a five-star master builder with Manulife Securities. As such, he will be submitting a receipt to Manulife, and they will be matching his donation. "It's a fabulous way of doubling up donations," he said. The contributions included items CCS is in need of, like cereals, canned vegetables, meat and fruits. Photo by Bill Rea



Associates at the Sears Canada Vaughan National Logistics Centre south of Bolton recently had a very large pile of toys to contribute to the efforts of Caledon Community Services (CCS) and the annual Santa Fund. Deanna Hart, Mary Falcone and Shona Lauzon of CCS were on hand to collect it all. Photo by Bill Rea