

Downtown Bolton celebrates Cinco De Mayo with Street Festival

By **Riley Murphy**

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Downtown Bolton came alive last Saturday night, celebrating Mexican culture with its very own Cinco De Mayo festival.

Both inside and outside the Humber River Centre were packed with attendees enjoying live performances, an indoor vendor market, and various delicacies.

Captivating the audience's attention were both mariachi bands and traditional dances.

The event is a returning celebration put on by local organization, the Bolton Community Crew (BCC).

Sarah Leslie, BCC chair, says the event has been running for seven years, growing more and more each May, both in attendees and vendors.

Residents could shop for a variety of clothes, jewelry, food, and more.

One of those vendors was local florist Samantha D'Alessandro, and her business, Heavy Petals.

Attendees could be seen browsing her selection of available flowers and bouquets and even entering her raffle.

After honing her skills for more than 10 years, when D'Alessandro returned to Canada from Australia, she knew it was time to open her own business.

With a brand-new business and being a local resident herself, she said she came to Cinco De Mayo as a vendor because, with a community-based business, she wanted to show Bolton what they're all about.

'It's very community-based and because I'm local I like to carry community-based, shop local, that kind of thing,' added D'Alessandro. 'I thought it would be nice to come celebrate and let people see what we're all about.'

Leslie said that at the BCC, they feel it's important to bring culture to the community.

'We find that because Cinco de Mayo is a well-known festival pretty much across the world, we did want to bring a little piece of it here,' she said, adding it's an opportunity to both teach the community and celebrate at the same time.

'The proof is in the pudding, people want things to do,' said Leslie, looking out at the large crowd gathered around the live performances.

Even on an unexpected chilly May night, more than hundred residents came out to enjoy the festival.

'We've also had a very long winter; this is an opportunity for everyone to get out of their house and do something fun that they normally wouldn't do,' said Leslie. 'For us, when we host an event, and we see this type of turnout, we [think], yeah, we nailed it. This was the goal.'

'This was the goal, to get our community members out, enjoy something different, and our mission has been accomplished.'