

# HollyFest attracts thousands to Orangeville Fairgrounds over two-day Christmas market

By **Sam Odrowski**

The Orangeville Citizen's inaugural HollyFest Christmas market welcomed thousands of shoppers over two days, offering handcrafted and unique products from a curated selection of 100 vendors.

Dufferin-County-based businesses, charities, non-profits, and crafters filled up the Orangeville Fairgrounds on Saturday, November 22, and Sunday, November 23, for a one-of-a-kind shopping experience.

"HollyFest was a wonderful addition to an already festive weekend in Orangeville. With Joy and Lights (Festival), the Christmas tree lighting, and our Santa Claus parade all bringing the community together, HollyFest added another warm and welcoming place for families to shop and celebrate," Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post enthused.

"I was so impressed by the incredibly diverse array of vendors, the overall energy of the event, and, most importantly, the generosity shown by the community to support the Orangeville Food Bank... Events like this one remind us what makes Orangeville so special."

HollyFest was free to attend, and instead of charging an admission fee, donations to the Orangeville Food Bank were encouraged at the door.

In the end, the food bank collected 1,131 pounds of food and over \$3,300.

Carrie-Anne DeCaprio, donor engagement and community outreach manager at the Orangeville Food Bank, told the Citizen she was impressed with the success of HollyFest and enjoyed having conversations with attendees about the important work being done at the food bank.

"HollyFest was great because when it opened on both days, there was a lineup out the door," she said. "I think for myself and the other vendors who were there, that just gives you an initial rush, goosebumps, and excitement that it's going to be a great day."

DeCaprio continued, "Then it just kept getting better and better, with Santa Claus wandering around, the Grinch wandering around, and getting to see all the different artisans and crafters. It's just amazing to see what the people in our community had on display and what they bring to the table."

"It was a beautiful event, and I really look forward to it next year," she smiled.

The Orangeville-based 1849 Lorne Scots Royal Canadian Army Cadets directed traffic through the parking lot, and Dufferin DJs played Christmas music for the duration of HollyFest.

"HollyFest Christmas market was truly magical this year - huge crowds came out to support us, the weekend was full of festive energy, and we were able to contribute to such a great cause in our community," said Janine Taylor, HollyFest event manager. "Thanks to our incredible vendors, whose talent and heart made the market sparkle brighter than we could have imagined."

HollyFest Event Director Doug Rowe said he's thrilled with the community support he witnessed over the weekend.

"What an amazing community," he said. "Thank you to everyone who stopped by and supported the event. Whether you shopped the vendors, dropped off a donation for the food bank, or just chatted with us at the Orangeville Citizen booth, we are grateful to everyone who checked out HollyFest."

Rowe added, ?We look forward to hosting it again in 2026.?