

HomeJames is back for holiday season

By Bill Rea

HomeJames is back in Caledon to make sure people get home safe over the holidays.

A phone call to the HomeJames dispatch line (905-951-9000) will result in a team of three going to the client's location in a shuttle vehicle. One of the volunteers is assigned to drive the client's vehicle, with the client and his or her passengers riding in it. Another team member is in charge of the shuttle vehicle, and the third member is the navigator.

The program was recently launched, and the first weekend of service has just been completed.

Taylor Parnaby is running the program this year with Bernie Rochon.

‘It’s a huge job,’ Parnaby commented at the launch ceremony, pointing out it involves between 150 and 200 volunteers. The objective is there be no significant traffic accidents or fatalities while the program operates.

A number of local dignitaries were on hand for the launch, including Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones.

‘HomeJames is all about don’t drink and drive, but it’s a much more proactive approach,’ she commented. She added it’s also fun to volunteer for something like this, as she did last year. ‘I had a ball,’ she declared.

‘I wouldn’t miss this,’ Mayor Marolyn Morrison declared. ‘This is really important.’

Morrison reflected back on her involvement in getting RoadWatch going in the 1990s, commenting she’s ready to back a program that makes the roads safer.

She also observed there’s still more work to do.

‘There are some people out there who don’t get it,’ she remarked, adding that there are people who feel the need to be out there and helping to address the problem.

‘I had an absolute ball,’ she said about her involvement.

‘There’s no other community like Caledon,’ she said. ‘Caledon is special. People will step up and people will come forward.’

‘It was a booming success last year and I know it’s going to be a booming success this year,’ commented Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson.

He added the program has grown a lot in the years it’s been in place. He also observed the success has been the result of support in the community from groups like service clubs and corporate sponsors. The local car dealership are once again this year contributing shuttle vehicles.

There are also the volunteers who pitch in.

Tilson observed the program provided 326 rides last year, resulting in about 800 drivers and their passengers getting to their destinations safe. He added there were 9,838 kilometres travelled, ‘and zero fatalities.’

‘This is an exciting program,’ he added, pointing out clients made voluntary donations totalling more than \$8,900 last year, and that money went to support local community groups. ‘This speaks volumes about the program.’

‘HomeJames is a wonderful program,’ commented Mayor-Elect Allan Thompson, who observed that Caledon has always been a leader in things like this, and this is another example. ‘I know we’re going to have another successful year.’

Caledon OPP has always been appreciative of the help from HomeJames participants.

Acting Sergeant Brenda Evans said the detachment has assigned 10 officers to the festive Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (RIDE) campaign this year.

Evans also recalled talking to her nine-year-old son last year about a media release she issued about an impaired driver.

‘He should have called HomeJames,’ he said.

‘If a nine-year-old can understand that message, that means we have to carry on with our media message,’ Evans declared.



Mayor-Elect Allan Thompson and Councillor Rob Mezzapelli signed up to volunteer for the program.



Taylor Parnaby and Bernie Rochon are running the HomeJames program this year. They joined Mayor Marolyn Morrison at the recent launch.