

HomeJames is getting lots of people home after celebrating this season

By Bill Rea

The HomeJames program in Caledon is going strong this year, although more volunteers would be a big help.

The program, which is operating out of the former Legion hall in Bolton, offers free rides home for people who might have had a bit too much to drink while celebrating the season.

The program is operating Friday and Saturday nights over the holidays, as well as New Year's Eve.

Diane Tolstoy, vice-president of operations for the program, said the activity has been comparable to last year, although things are expected to get busier as the holidays progress.

Terry Fast, one of the team leaders for the program, delivered an orientation address to the volunteers before Friday night's session got busy, thanking everyone for their support.

"This is something that is near and dear to our hearts, and something we enjoy doing," he said.

The program dispatches teams of three. One person is the "driver," who drives the client's car. The "escort" drives the shuttle vehicle and the "navigator" makes sure they get to where they're supposed to be.

Dispatches are on duty at the hall, and the teams are tracked on GPS.

"We know where you are," Fast assured them.

Tolstoy reported that heading into Friday's shift, there have been 105 rides provided that got 247 people home safe.

She also said they are going to need volunteers for New Year's Eve. Those who are interested can visit the website at www.homejames-caledon.ca



HomeJames Team Leader Terry Fast watches as dispatchers Melissa Cochrane and Dave Borgal take calls from people seeking rides home and send out teams.



Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones was flanked by her teammates Friday night; Councillor Nick deBoer and Trustee Stan Cameron