

Janes uses the Little Grey Work Horse to help those who fall between the cracks

By Rob Paul

For over a decade, the Little Grey Work Horse has been helping out those who aren't necessarily in the spotlight.

It's been a way for community organizations that don't necessarily have the means to continue to get the extra support they need to remain a key part of the Caledon community.

The Little Grey Work Horse might just look like a trailer that can be hitched to the back of a vehicle, but it's become so much more to the community. It's become the shining light for so many that allows them to pursue their passions.

The owner of the Little Grey Work Horse is Caledon resident Harold Janes, who came up with the idea with his wife Wanda to collect items people would normally throw away and turn it into a fundraising opportunity to help out local charities.

"The Little Grey Work Horse is a small utility trailer that's four by six feet, and it's an old mini trailer that I bought around 2002 and it's been the Little Grey Work Horse since 2007—that's when we started the charity," said Janes. "Originally, it was a fundraiser for the Bolton Sea Cadets; my wife was the president of the Caledon Navy League and we used it as a fundraiser.

"Then, it took off and we started doing other groups. We do Jason's Quest—Jason Scordia's charity in Caledon that sponsors young children of single-parents to get them involved in Special Olympics—we also do the Caledon Seniors' Centre, the Bolton Sea Cadets, Sarcoma Cancer Foundation, Meaghan's Music Room, and GOALS (Growing Opportunities for Adult Life Skills). We usually split them up and focus on one at a time, it takes a couple months to get a decent donation for them—donations are usually between \$2,500 and \$5,000 by the time we get it done."

Janes is happy to have anyone drop off any item he can use for fundraising at any time, he encourages people to stop by 27 Goodfellow Crescent in Bolton and donate by putting items right into the Little Grey Work Horse.

"It's all old electronics that people drop off into the driveway right into the trailer, or people can donate empty beer containers and liquor containers, pop cans, household batteries and car batteries, Christmas lights, basically anything people don't want like that can be dropped off," he said. "I then cash in the stuff and donate the money. We don't pick it up for them, we just leave the trailer in the driveway for anyone to come by and drop something off into it. We're happy to have anyone drop something off at any time—24/7, 365, they can come—I've had people at 10 at night and 4 in the morning."

Thanks to connections throughout the Caledon community, Janes was able to find various organizations to partner with and help through his charity.

"When we were focused on the Bolton Sea Cadets, we used to have a lot of garage sales and people would bring electronics and they'd never sell," he says. "I used to have a guy come by and take the electronics for me, and then someone told me that I could sell them at the recycling depot. So, I started from there and it grew into taking other items that people would be getting rid of and I basically just would try and sell anything people would get rid of.

"Then we started doing other groups that we know well, like we've known Meaghan Zaremba from Meaghan's Music Room and Jason Scordia for a long time and we know someone in Caledon East involved with Sarcoma Cancer. That's how it's kind of grown into what I'm doing now. I've got my groups now that I help—I can't help everyone, so I focus on these ones, and I just rotate through donating to these groups."

Though he does the heavy lifting, Janes credits the support from Caledon and various surrounding communities for being the ones to step up and take the time to donate old items.

?We've had tremendous support, I can't complain at all,? he said. ?If it weren't for the people who donate the stuff, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. The people of Bolton and Caledon have been fantastic. The surrounding community has been great too?we've had supporters in Nobleton, Brampton, Palgrave, Caledon East, Thornton, and we've gotten people as far as Barrie.?

Seeing the support throughout the pandemic has been fantastic, says Janes, it's really given him and his wife the opportunity to do even more for the organizations that don't always have enough funding.

?During the pandemic it's exploded?normally it takes a couple months to raise enough money, but it was so big, especially last summer, that it would only take us a month,? he said. ?It was great because it helped the people who needed it most. We aim to pick the groups that fall between the cracks. Everyone gives to big name groups, but not as many people know of Jason's Quest or Sarcoma Cancer, they're trying to do research and they need funding, the Bolton Sea Cadets have always had trouble fundraising and GOALS is a group that struggles too. We want to help the people who fall between the cracks.?

Despite doing this for over 10 years, Janes thinks he's still got a few more years left in him to help, especially because it's become his passion.

?We've never kept track because it's never concerned us what we give as long as we do give. I just really enjoy helping people. I'm getting older now. I'm turning 63, so, another couple of years and we'll see how it goes. I'm getting older and stuff is getting heavier, but it's been a lot of fun and I've met a lot of people. It's been a joy.?