

Look for the helpers

By SHERALYN ROMAN

The Caledon community is, generally speaking, one awesome group of people. At a population of about 66,500 and comprised of many small hamlets, neighbourhoods and villages, we are just small enough to say that we are still a community where many of us know our neighbours not just to nod and say hello but more importantly, enough to really care about them. In times of trouble, we might even rally around them. Even better, Caledon is the kind of community where even when we don't know our neighbours, we still rally around them! In a world that has been full of bad news lately, including the terrible tragedy of Flight #PS752 that impacted one of our very own, it's time we focussed on some good news for a change. To quote a phrase popularized by Mr. Rogers, (it was his mother who actually said it first) "When bad things happen in the news we should look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." Today I want to talk about just a few of the people in our community who are the helpers.

Caledon is blessed with an abundance of folks who spend countless hours of their time volunteering for various causes and community support agencies. Those volunteers deliver meals on wheels; they support local seniors, or volunteer with organizations serving children. Of course many of our volunteers are members of a myriad of social service clubs and organizations doing good work here. Sometimes, it's the folks who drive us home when we shouldn't be driving. Thanks, Home James. Sometimes it's as simple as a neighbour who organizes a carol sing-a-long at Christmas time for the enjoyment of families who live nearby. Thanks June Dias Simpson. Other times it's the people who recognize there are some pretty special people in Caledon who would benefit from instituting a local chapter of Special Olympics. Thank you Joe Sassine, Franca de Stefano and the many others that help to make your organization and the events you run such as a special place for local athletes. Thanks also to one of Special Olympics biggest advocates and "man about town" Jason Scordia who promotes Special Olympics at every opportunity including through the sale of his colouring book (designed with the help of his friend Chris Tampin) and by hosting an upcoming Gala on the 28th of February - yes tickets are still available!

We have Harold and Wanda Janes who, together with their "little grey workhorse," collect items from our entire community, recycling goods to raise funds for a variety of initiatives. Anyone from Caledon is welcome to drop old TV's, computers, VCR's, keyboards, toasters and microwaves along with alcohol beverage containers, batteries and even pop and beer can tabs into the trailer that sits permanently on their drive way. They will take care of the heavy lifting and they donate all the proceeds to various organizations like the Bolton Sea Cadets, Special Olympics Caledon, Meaghan's Music Room and more recently, toward EHE Sarcoma Cancer research. Look them up on facebook to find out more. Perhaps you've heard the name Dmytro Basmat, doing great work at Che's Place for the youth in our community but today we wanted to say a thank you to Antonio Rizzo and his family who created a fabulous Christmas light display, spread the word, then collected donations from our generous community as they came to admire his home. Che's Place and the campaign to support Reese Meyer and his family thank you.

That brings us to #GoReeseGo, an outpouring of community support and love probably unlike anything we have ever seen before. It's hard to single out any one person or organization such has been the response of the community, but people like Mira Dimovski Budd for example, who single-handedly organized an online auction certainly deserve applause. As of January 25th all signs pointed to the auction raising at least \$7,000, a number that's sure to climb by the time it officially closes. Again, the success of events such as this is due to both the person who steps up and all of our community who support it. Thank you. Reese's Hawks hockey family has been amazing and on Sunday, January 26th the Mississauga Steelheads organized a game day fundraiser, attended by so many from both within and outside of Caledon's borders, that it resulted in the presentation of a \$25,000 cheque! The best part of that day if you've seen the pictures, was watching Reese walk out for the puck drop - something he had vowed to be ready for and worked very hard to make come true despite the many challenges he faced along the way.

The Town of Caledon will be hosting their volunteer recognition ceremony tentatively scheduled for sometime in April. The nominations have just closed and I hope you took the time to recommend someone you know. There are so many people we could feature, so many who are doing good work in our community of communities. In Valleywood some people are coming together in an attempt to build an ice rink for the kids and Cheltenham, Inglewood and Terra Cotta have a long history of wonderful people

doing great things to support their communities. Don't even get me started on the number of folks who help run local soccer clubs, hockey teams, the Challenger baseball organization and more! If you know someone who should be featured here or nominated next year for a volunteer award, take the time to be sure you let us (and the Town) know! We all benefit from their time, expertise, leadership and commitment to community ? on behalf of the residents of Caledon ? thank you to ?the helpers? for all you do!