

Mayor shows support for meals on Wheels



A host of volunteers and officials were on hand to go out on the rounds as part of Mayors for Meals Day last Wednesday. Seen here are Joe Noble, Mary Louise Learn, Vicki Stafford, Susan Hicks, Jane Pizale, Mayor Marolyn Morrison, Jeff Smellie, Lisa Taillefer, Don Shoemaker, Pat Kolb, Bill Hitchin, Doris Porter, Fred Kolb, Caledon Meals on Wheels Executive Director Christine Sevigny and Program Manager Cathy Dance. Photo by Bill Rea

Mayors and councillors across Canada were showing their support for their local Meals on Wheels agencies for Mayors for Meals Day last Wednesday.

Caledon Mayor Marolyn Morrison was right in step, pitching in at the Caledon Meals on Wheels (CMOW) depot in Bolton. The initiative is a North American campaign put together by local Meals on Wheels agencies to raise awareness of senior hunger and the need for local action.

Many seniors and those facing or caring for someone with a critical illness run the risk of malnourishment, especially when they are living in rural areas with no access to public transportation. For those living in rural communities within Caledon, this is a reality. That's why Morrison spent her lunch hour delivering meals with a volunteer, servicing clients who would not be able to remain in their homes and communities if it wasn't for this service.

?'Many of the clients we service live alone, distanced from family and neighbours and lack any form of public transportation for food shopping,' CMOW Executive Director Christine Sevigny observed. 'That's why they rely on our meal service. We also provide them with companionship via our volunteer visitors program and exercise programs to keep them healthy and out of our healthcare system. It's a win-win for everyone.'

With Ontario's senior population projected to account for 23.6 per cent of the total by 2036, agencies, such as CMOW, are also counting on this annual campaign to increase their visibility within the community and attract more volunteers and local donors. 'With anticipated increased demand for our service in the near future and the possibility of meal subsidy limitations, we will be relying on local support from our volunteers and donors within the community to keep our programs and services running,' Sevigny commented. 'Many local organizations, such as Mars Canada, Cavalier and the Royal Bank are great supporters of our agency already, however, we will need more support from the community to continue to keep up with demand in the near future.'

Currently CMOW services more than 350 people in the Caledon and Orangeville area. CMOW volunteers spend over 8,200 hours per year driving and delivering meals, visiting and supporting seniors in their homes, checking in on seniors to make sure they are safe and helping CMOW run programs that promote physical and mental health.

'Volunteers are critical to the success of our agency and our community, that's why we're so grateful to have them,' Sevigny said, 'and that's why we'll need more to sustain this valuable service in the future.'