

National Volunteer Week:

Caledon Lions Club member of almost 40 Years recognized with volunteer award By Riley Murphy

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

In Canada, National Volunteer Week runs from April 19 ? 25, and Caledon often takes the time to honour its own during this time.

At last week's Caledon Lions Club annual appreciation banquet, Caledon Lion Gord McDonald was recognized with a Volunteer Award for all his efforts for almost the past four decades.

McDonald was a Caledon resident for over 30 years, now residing in Dufferin County. Caledon was the home of his business, McDonald Tool and Manufacturing, for decades before it moved back to its present, and original, home in Orangeville.

The summer after moving to Caledon, McDonald joined the Caledon Lions Club; next year will be his 40th year as a member.

He's worn numerous hats, once president and now treasurer, but over the years, his commitment to helping build and organize numerous missions has never changed.

The club brought him to numerous other volunteer ventures, including assisting with the 104th International Plowing Match and Rural Expo and the Caledon Agricultural Society Annual Fair.

Whether he's helping organize 60 volunteers or building floats, he's had his hands full.

With the Lions, McDonald has built all items under the sun, such as floats for the Christmas parade, tractor-trailers, and people movers for fairs.

He also worked on the club's version of the Polar Express, which many may know has now transformed into Thomas the Tank Engine, an attraction the Lions bring to events such as the past Annual Santa Photo Day with the Caledon Village Association, working with a steam engine and horn, all for families to enjoy.

With all his ventures, McDonald says he wouldn't do it if he 'wasn't having fun.?

At the annual appreciation banquet recently held by the Lions Club, McDonald was in for a shock when he was presented with an Outstanding Volunteer Award by MPP for Dufferin?Caledon Sylvia Jones.

'I had no idea,?' he says, adding it was equally as surprising to see his family in attendance, ready to celebrate with him.

'We had no idea that they were coming, and then they started walking in, and it was, 'well, what are you doing here.?'

When McDonald received the award, he was at a bit of a loss for words.

'I didn't say that much,?' he says. 'I got kind of emotional about it.?'

Knowing that the Lions Club helped push for the award, he says they know how much he appreciates it.

Jones said she was happy to recognize McDonald with a scroll after his family contacted her office to share the impact he has had over many years of volunteer service in Dufferin-Caledon, particularly at the Caledon Lions Club.

Great timing, as it fell right before the start of National Volunteer Week.

?National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to recognize the people who give their time, energy and compassion to support others. In communities like Dufferin-Caledon, clubs, churches and many other organizations rely heavily on volunteers for events and services, and their contributions make our communities stronger, more connected and a better place to live,? says Jones.

Looking ahead, McDonald shares he's excited about their upcoming projects for the Caledon Fair as they work to build carts for a big race.

Taking pressure off the community to build their own carts, the Lions are taking it on and off residents' shoulders, hopefully encouraging people to join together in teams and come out to race.

Looking back on his almost 40 years with the club, McDonald says it's been a great time.

?I've had a good time getting involved in all these things. I appreciate everybody that backed me along the way.