

Orangeville Lions 24th Annual Home & Garden Show to return]

By **Sam Odrowski**

Spring is approaching, and the Orangeville Lions Club is inviting the community to celebrate its arrival with the 24th annual Home and Garden Show.

The Lions anticipate 8,000 to 10,000 people will stroll through the Orangeville Agricultural Centre at the fairgrounds for the event, held from Friday, March 31 to Sunday, April 2.

'It's a time when people break out of their winter shells and get out do something fun,' said Orangeville Lions Club spokesperson Sandy Brown. 'Free parking, free admission, it's a good time.'

Home improvement is the focus for the up to 190 vendors participating in the show. Booths will feature businesses known for building, renovations, doors, windows, landscaping, painting, roofing, heating, air conditioning, flooring and interior design.

Other parts of the show will promote real estate, retirement living and municipal services.

The Home and Garden Show helps connect many vendors with the customers they need to stay busy while the weather's warm.

'Some of the landscaping guys are able to write their book of business for the summer based on the number of leads they receive from the show,' said Brown.

He told the Citizen the Home and Garden Show is a 'win-win-win' for the businesses exposed to potential customers, attendees who get to see a variety of vendors in one place and the Orangeville Lions, who fundraise \$30,000-\$60,000.

Currently, 165 vendors are signed up, and 20-25 booths are still available. Anyone interested in signing up can email orangevillelionshomegardenshow@gmail.com or call 519-943-2045.

Revenue made off renting booths to businesses supports the charitable work that the Orangeville Lions Club does locally.

Recently, the club donated \$2,500 to the Dufferin Men's Shelter project at Choices, \$2,500 to Family Transition Place and \$24,000 to Headwaters Health Care Centre to purchase new laser eye surgery equipment.

The Orangeville Lions committed to raising \$250,000 in ophthalmology equipment for Headwaters over 20 years ago, but the recent donation brings their fundraising total to over \$400,000.

Eye health has long been a focus for the Orangeville Lions and other clubs worldwide.

Helen Keller, a disability rights advocate born blind and deaf, delivered a speech at the Lions Club International Convention Centre in Ohio during the early summer of 1925. She challenged the Lions Club to become 'Knights of the Blind' by supporting organizations working to prevent and treat blindness.

'The prime fundraising goal of the Lions for almost 100 years has been vision awareness, helping those with visual impairment and trying to prevent blindness,' said Brown.

Other causes the Orangeville Lions Club supports include Guide Dogs of Canada, Big Brothers Big Sisters and Camp Dorset ? Dialysis Retreat.

Lavender Blue is catering the home and garden show; some vendors will sell food and drinks.

The event is the Orangeville Lions Club's biggest volunteering effort each year, utilizing all 50 members in the weeks leading up to it.

?It's a great show and I have to take my hat off to David Young, who's the Lion that proposed this idea to the club some 25 years ago,? Brown said.