

Orangeville Music Theatre gives gift of music at awards night

Orangeville Music Theatre (OMT) celebrated the theatrical achievements of the company's four productions from the past year – Mary Poppins, Shrek Jr., Calendar Girls and Beauty and the Beast Jr. – at their annual awards dinner the OMMIES in March. The evening was made even more significant by OMT's gift of a \$7,000 cheque to support the new Music and Memory Program at Dufferin Oaks Long Term Care Home in Shelburne.

Music and Memory is a music therapy program which helps with memory issues in Dufferin Oaks' residents suffering from Alzheimers and dementia. The long-term care facility became certified as a Music and Memory home last year and was in need of funds to purchase iPods, music, head phones, and appropriate storage facilities to be able to expand the program to all residents of Dufferin Oaks, OMT Board Member Bobbi Ferguson said.

OMT launched efforts to raise funds through the sales of a calendar and presentation of Tim Firth's stage play Calendar Girls presented at the Orangeville Opera House in January to support the program, which helps patients with responsive behaviours, sleep and rest as well as providing moments of joy and comfort.

Calendar Girls is a true story of a Women's Institute in the U.K. which raised £3.5 million featuring nude poses of women from the First World War. The play is usually performed in conjunction with a calendar sold to raise money for a local charity and Rebecca Hall, professional photographer and unit leader nurse at Dufferin Oaks, photographed the calendar which featured many local icons. My art and profession came together in this calendar and I couldn't be happier with the results, Hall said.

There was no musical version of the play, so local choral group the Sweet Adelines, led by Joan Borden, jumped at the opportunity to provide the musical aspect of the performances, not only for their love of singing but for the overall experience and revealing a side of the Adelines that most have never seen, Ferguson said.

Putting on a play instead of our usual musical had challenges, she added, but we learned a lot and are very pleased with the results of every aspect of the project. From the sales results of the calendar, to the community involvement, to the audience reaction to the fun cast of Calendar Girls, it was truly rewarding. When you receive compliments from audiences such as the cast genuinely looked like they were best friends you know you got it right.

Watch for details of OMT's June 2017 shows: All Shook Up (featuring Elvis songs) and Disney's Aladdin Jr. on the website orangevillemusictheatre.com