

Think of HomeJames when out celebrating over the holidays

By Bill Rea

It's getting close to that time of the year for holiday revelry, meaning it's also tie to think about how to get home if the celebrating has gone too far.

HomeJames can be the answer.

The program has been running a number of years in Caledon. People can phone the dispatch centre if they fear they've had too much to drink. A team of three will respond and get the client, his or her passengers and their car home safe.

Broadcaster Tayler Parnaby is running he program this year with Bernie Rochon. Parnaby said it will be starting Nov. 14, and will run Friday and Saturday evenings until the end of December, plus New Year's Eve, which falls on a Wednesday this year. It will be based out of Humber River Hall (formerly the Bolton branch of the Royal Canadian Legion).

As in past years, they are going to need volunteers; on the order of 150 to 200.

Parnaby said it's encouraging that they have been hearing from more younger people interested in volunteering, so the message must be getting out. There are lots of tasks to be performed, including driving, registration, displacing, manning the phones, arranging the food, etc.

This cause is one that's special to Parnaby. He recalled his early days in broadcasting, reading public service announcements from the Ontario Safety League. And then there was the day he heard sirens, and later learning they had been headed to the scene of an accident in which several young people, including a friend he skied with, had been killed.

When he started working in Toronto, he started getting involved in such groups as the Toronto Safety League, and was eventually asked to be honorary chair of a group known as Operation Red Nose.

"I volunteered," he said.

Parnaby said he's always been volunteering, to "give back to the community in one fashion or another."

"This one seemed like a decent fit with my interests," he added.

This year's HomeJames program has a new website (www.homejames-caledon.ca), which contains lots of information on how to volunteer, including access to the forms.

"It's totally interactive," he said.

There will also be a registration night Nov. 6 at Humber River Hall, starting at 6 p.m.