

Coboconk couple happy to chill out for a good cause

Catherine Whitnall

Most people would be offended if someone told them to ‘go jump in the lake,’ but a growing number of Kawartha Lakes residents are embracing the ‘invitation’.

That’s because doing so is helping support local charities that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The #jumpinthelakechallenge was launched during a live Facebook posting where Balsam Lake resident Dean Michel said he would jump in the lake if people raised \$500 in donations for the Coboconk and Area Food Bank. Contributions started almost immediately so Michel added his wife, Jennifer Bacon, to the challenge and upped the ante to \$1,000.

“I didn’t think it would get that high. I thought \$500 was a stretch,” said Michel who was blown away when donations hit \$3,000 in just a few days and just kept coming.

It will have a major impact on the food bank which operates solely on donations.

“The Coboconk and Area Foodbank (CAFB) is crucial to our community as we have a number of low-income families who rely on us year-round and seasonal workers who rely on us occasionally,” said food bank chair Amy Alfredsson.

Not only is the food bank operating with a skeleton crew as the building makes physical distancing incredibly difficult, but it has also had to purchase food from a wholesaler at slightly higher prices than normal, as retailers are hesitant to sell the quantity of product required.

“We are fortunate to live in a supportive and generous community,” stated Alfredsson. “The Jump in the Lake Challenge is so wonderful for the CAFB at a time when we are not equipped to handle food donations and we are spending more on food.”

Buoyed by the support, Michel issued the challenge to neighbours and friends.

So far, more than a dozen families and individuals will be taking the plunge into Balsam and Sturgeon lakes. Michel and Bacon plan to do theirs on May 2 at 2 p.m. but the ‘when’ is flexible as is the ‘who’. Participants are asked to tag their charity of choice on Facebook and include donation links so the funds go directly to the organization.

Michel hopes people will post video of their jumps.

“I’d like to know how many people actually get involved. I’m curious to see what kind of impact we can make as a community.”

To learn more about how, check out <https://youtu.be/eXoA9Yb-djc>.