

Kinsmen Club celebrates 60 years of lending a hand

by Abigail Cukier

Special to the Beaver

The Kinsmen Club's motto is 'Serving the community's greatest need.' And the local Oakville club has been doing that for 60 years.

This has included purchasing an ambulance for St. John Ambulance; providing \$30,000 towards construction of Kinoak Arena and \$45,000 towards renovations at Oakville Arena; supporting many minor sport organizations; running the Kinsmen Minor Softball League; collecting thousands of pounds of food each year at the Santa Claus Parade; and supporting Halton Women's Place, Cystic Fibrosis Canada, Habitat for Humanity Halton and Halton Trauma Centre.

Besides fundraising, Kinsmen Club of Oakville members have helped build Habitat for Humanity projects and collected donations of personal supplies for the Oakville Lighthouse shelter. They might paint a room or run a fundraiser — anything that needs to be done, they are a group that can be counted on to assist.

Lifetime Member Ralph Robinson, also a veteran Ward 1 Town councillor, joined the Kinsmen Club in Lindsay, Ont., in October 1954 at age 22. Wherever he moved, he would join the local chapter, including Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and Dartmouth, N.S. He moved to Oakville in 1975 and promptly signed up with the local chapter.



Mayor Rob Burton issued an official proclamation to The Kinsmen Club of Oakville declaring Jan. 28, 2015 as Kinsmen Day in celebration of the local club's 60th anniversary. Pictured, from front to back, are: Club President David Kuhnke, Mayor Rob Burton, Holly Thompson, Kinsmen lifetime member and Ward 1 Town Councillor Ralph Robinson, and local club vice-president Art Walford.

| photo by Eric Riehl – Oakville Beaver (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog or facebook.com/HaltonPhotog)

"It's a great bunch of people," said Robinson. "I am the oldest member in Oakville now. We have accomplished quite a bit of community service

and it's social, too. You get to know people and help people."

Founded by Hal Rogers on Feb. 20, 1920,

Kin Canada is the nation's largest all-Canadian service club organization. Approximately 6,500 members belong to 480 Kinsmen, Kinette and Kin clubs across Canada. Kinsmen clubs are mainly male, Kinette clubs are mainly female and Kin clubs' membership are men and women. Kin Canada clubs have donated more than \$1 billion to Canadian causes, communities and individuals in need, as well as to international disaster relief.

The Oakville Kinsmen Club was chartered on Jan. 28, 1955 with 12 members. Membership has been as high as 30 and currently stands at 10.

"It is getting more difficult with service clubs," Robinson said. "More people are commuting and getting home later and are so busy, but we are strong and healthy and always looking for new members."

"It's nice to get out with a bunch of guys and have a bit of fun and have a few laughs and tell some stories without having to worry about getting a political phone call or email. It's a nice relaxing time."

In fact, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the club, members are skipping the fancy party and going out for wings.

For more about the Kinsmen Club of Oakville, contact Robinson at 905-827-7659.

Those interested in the club can sit in on a monthly meeting, which includes dinner.

General meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at Hampton's Restaurant and Catering, 754 Bronte Rd.

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VOLUNTEER FAIR
Thursday, March 19, 10:00 am-1:00 pm
 Peter Gilgan Family YMCA, 410 Rebecca Street

Find local volunteer opportunities for any age and learn how you can make a difference.

The event is hosted by youth in the Volunteer Ready Program run by CYAN and the YMCA of Oakville with generous funding provided by Oakville Community Foundation.

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