



Ralph Boomhower

nothing to do with sports.

"I was the first (of the family) to graduate from high school."

It may have been his love of athletics and his caring for youngsters that led to his running the YMCA in Kingston.

"I love kids," he said, and he and his wife Betty — the couple met at the Kinsmen pool and will celebrate 45 years of marriage next June — have two boys, Todd, 43, and Sean, 40.

He joined the Belleville Fire Department in 1969, a job he calls "phenomenal."

"The clowning that goes on there ..." Boomhower said, shaking his head.

And the best part is once again the kids, who are awed by firefighters.

"It's like McDonald's," Boomhower said. "They want to see the trucks."

He hasn't slowed down in retirement.

He is involved in the Food for Learning program at Prince of Wales School, and chairman of the Living Hope Community Meals through his church, St. Paul's Anglican.

"We feed the needy every day."

He is a regular blood donor and likes to watch hockey and baseball games on the tube or in person. When pressed, he'll confess a penchant for the Leafs and Blue Jays.

He is chairman of the Wharf Street Debating Club and a regular blood donor.

When he gets time, he likes to ride his bike and is a member of the local classic car club. He's been lovingly restoring a 1967 Camaro for eight years.

"I've owned 16 Camaros," he said.

He is still involved with the toy drive because of his respect and liking for kids, who will decide what kind of future the world has in store.

"Children are the most precious commodity."

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