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The masks tell the story – but only part of it.

Members of the Lindsay Optimist Club are committed to working within COVID's strict rules in order to ensure a Christmas tradition continues: the local service club's annual tree sale.

Members showed up in droves at its sales site in front of Canadian Tire in Lindsay to unload the first shipment of trees, which come from Sommerville Nurseries near Alliston, Ontario.

“There was quite a bit of jockeying around, with each of us keeping our (two-metre) distance,” says Kimmett, before adding with a laugh “and if we're being honest, a lot of us were moving a bit slower than we normally do. Not because we're out of shape. But because we had to remove our glasses, which kept fogging up because of the masks! And it seems like we all wear glasses!”

Indeed, the tone on Saturday morning amongst the two dozen or so members who showed up was jovial and upbeat, says Optimist president, Mike McGregor.

“As a club we really haven't had much opportunity to meet since February. So, this was a chance for all of us to, well, catch up – safely and outdoors. Even though we were all in masks, you could tell there were a lot smiles.”

The club is again selling spruce, balsam fir and douglas fir in heights that range from six to 10 feet. Also available are shorter trees, which Kimmett says are popular with apartment dwellers. The sale runs daily until Dec 22 or until supplies run out. Prices vary from \$25 to \$60 dollars. Cash only.

“This is our biggest fundraiser,” notes Kimmett about the sale that typically generates upwards of \$10 thousand dollars for the club's area youth programs.

“And it says a lot about this community – and Canadian Tire, which has always been so supportive – that it's always come through for us. We're confident it will again this year, despite the unique circumstances.”

“There was quite a bit of talk early on about if – and how – we should proceed,” says Carl Kimmett, the club's chair about its yearly fundraiser.

“We're lucky in that one of our members is married to a physician who helped set out the protocols we'd need to follow.”

“And once we had (the protocols), for us but also for the customers, we were confident we could carry on, safely.”

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