

Colborne Chronicle

Festival of Trees begins Friday in Colborne

PETE FISHER
NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY

COLBORNE - The sixth annual Colborne Public School Festival of Trees takes place this coming weekend.

Starting on Friday (from 5 to 9 p.m.) and running Saturday (11 a.m. to 9 p.m.) at the Colborne Legion there will be 25 fully decorated Christmas trees which will be raffled and auctioned off along with a silent auction.

The Colborne Public School's music program is entirely self-funded - mainly from the weekend event.

"We had done a bunch of fundraisers in the past and this was something we wanted to add," organizer and teacher Chad Morford said.

"Once I started putting feelers out into the community Robin (Ferguson) and Marci (Corbeil) got involved."

The Festival of Trees was created at first in honour of children around the community who have died.

This year a memorial tree will honour the memories of Lizzy Corbeil, Robyn and Eric Taylor, Kaitlyn Bates, Kandas Derry, Mitchell Ferguson, Erin Reed and Kevin and Brandon Cote.

When the "feelers" went out, Morford said, "it exploded from there."

They deliberately hold the festival during the weekend of the Santa Claus parade as it brings many people from outside the community to Colborne.

Each year, through the generosity of people in the community and sponsors, the festival has raised a staggering \$60,000 - or \$10,000 per year.

Prior to the festival, Morford said, he was trying to organize close to 10 different fundraisers throughout the year to match what the festival brings in.

Funds raised go toward musi-



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Robin Ferguson, Chad Morford and Marci Corbeil are ready for this weekend's Festival of Trees at the Colborne Legion.

cal education for students from Grade 3 to Grade 8 using ORFF xylophones, drumline and band instruments, as well as all repairs and regular maintenance.

The school's drumline has won the Canadian Drumline Association's Provincial Championship in their classification for the past four years, going up against mainly high schools with up to 1,500 students.

This year they hope to compete in both Ontario and Quebec.

Morford said Colborne Public School is one of the only public schools with a drumline

"We're one of the only compet-

ing ensembles in Canada for the Canadian Drumline Association and we don't compete in the lowest class, which means we compete against high schools."

Mitchell Ferguson was 14 years old when he died as a result of a tobogganing accident near his home in December 2008.

Morford had been his teacher for Grades 7 and 8 and had contacted Robin Ferguson about her son's "extra energy."

Mitchell was soon in the school's drumline and it turned into his passion.

"When he was 10, for his 11th birthday the only thing he asked

for his entire life was a set of drums, so we went and bought him a set of drums," Ferguson said.

When Morford originally approached the family about the Festival of Trees, the Fergusons were looking for something to do in Mitchell's memory.

"It had to be something Mitch was tied to," Ferguson said. "This was perfect for our family."

"We wanted a tree that was all things Mitch."

They had so many donations for their Toronto Maple Leaf tree that they did two trees: a "home" jersey tree and an "away" jersey

tree.

Mitchell would be 21 years old this year and Ferguson said she knows her son would have loved the Festival of Trees.

"The way it's grown and become part of the community - he would have loved that," she said.

Marci Corbeil, whose 12-year-old daughter Elizabeth (Lizzy) Corbeil died in an ATV accident in June 2007, said the Festival of Trees helps her family each year because they get to speak with other families who have been through a similar type of loss.

"You don't have to explain yourself," she said.

After this year, Ferguson said, she hopes to take a behind-the-scenes role with the festival.

"I'd like it to be about the festival and memorial tree and not continuously go over the death of my son," she said.

"I think he's happy where he is and happy how the Festival of Trees has evolved.

"I'd rather focus on the 14 years and memories he gave us rather than the moment he died. When you lose a spouse you're either a widow or widower. When we lose a parents we're orphans. But there is no word for the loss of a child. And I really believe that's because there is no word for that loss."

Ferguson said she will always be grateful for the Festival of Trees and how it has helped their family and will always support it.

"We come together once a year with the community and the school that you're personally attached to and other parents and it helps the grieving process. And for our family, we really treasure that connection."

For more information visit www.colborneps.ca or contact Chad Morford at chad_morford@kprdsb.ca or at the Colborne Public School, 905-355-2532.

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**Cramahe
drug bust
nets \$39K**

**in drugs,
BRIG-ATEL INDEPENDENT
cash out.
2-2-15**

Cramahe Twp. - Police here raided a Cramahe Township home Oct. 7 and arrested a man for drug offences, according to a release from police. Northumberland Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), the OPP Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) and the OPP Emergency Response Team (ERT) executed a Controlled Drugs and Substances Search Warrant at a residence in Cramahe Township. A 35 year old man was arrested at the scene and charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking in marijuana, possession for the purpose of trafficking in cannabis resin (hash), and possession of property obtained by crime. Police seized approximately \$39,000 worth of drugs, Canadian currency, and cell phones. The man, whose name is being withheld, was released from custody with a court date in November 2015.

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