

Multi-generational memoirs printed

The transfer of wisdom between three generations of Acton area residents was seamless in an interdenominational, intergenerational project that wrapped up last Saturday at the Churchill Community Church Christmas tea.

The project, called Spiritual Heritage – 3 Traditions, 3 Generations, One Community was designed to capture the life stories and spiritual heritage of seniors in three churches, Churchill, Bethel Christian Reformed Church and St. Joseph.

Speaking to a tearoom packed with many seniors, Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong, who helped secure a \$25,000 New Horizon federal grant for the project, said the Acton results were “wonderful.” He said in this digital day and age, you don’t often see the “intergenerational transfer of the wisdom” that this project created in the Acton community.

“The wisdom you’ve gained through the years and the contributions you have made, continue to

be important, especially to the younger people,” Chong said as he accepted a copy of the anthologies of interviews of elders at Churchill, Bethel and St. Joseph.

Judy Burtney, coordinator of the project at Churchill, said without a large youth group, adult church members interviewed the elders, a process that led to a “beautiful book” of memoirs of local families.

“It certainly gives newer people that are coming to the church a background of how our church got started,” Burtney said, adding descendants of early families, including pioneer families like the Swackhammers, are church members today.

Facilitator Norah Savage-Zylstra of Storylines, trained students at St. Joseph and Georgetown Christian School where the Grade seven class, and youth from Acton’s Bethel Church, interviewed six seniors from Bethel.

Student Lauren Druif, said she loved how seniors came alive, “al-



MEMOIRS COMPLETED: Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong (right) helped celebrate the wrap-up of an intergenerational memoir project at a recent tea at Churchill Community Church. Also on hand were, from left: The Reverend John Bedell, Katelyn Hicks and Lauren Druif, Back: Norah Savage-Zylstra and Pastor Ray Vander Kooij. – Frances Niblock photo

most...became a kid, again,” as they talked about their lives, tales that were turned into stories in a scrapbook album.

Bethel Pastor Ray Vander Kooij said he loved how the youth and seniors connected deeply on

emotional and spiritual levels that continue today.

“Those connections were created in a very

quick way because so much of themselves were shared in the midst of the journey,” Pastor Vander Kooij said, adding the

grant included funding to train trainers, so the project lives on with Grade seven students at Georgetown Christian School.



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