



Members of the 12th annual Jingle Bell Run, Walk and Wheel Committee pose with a cheque for \$14,500 last week - proceeds from the event going to Community Living Essex County. The committee held a reception to formally thank volunteers, sponsors and other contributors to the event.

Jingle Bell Run proceeds top \$14K

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

The "chaos" that hundreds of enthusiastic participants brought to the 12th annual Ken Knapp Ford Jingle Bell Run, Walk and Wheel in November was well worth it, organizers said last week, announcing that \$14,500 was raised during the event for Community Living Essex County.

Tony DeSantis, community relations manager for CLEC, had many contributors to thank after accepting the cheque.

"The chaos is getting less and less with how organized it's getting," DeSantis said, giving a nod to the event's committee for successfully lining up about 600 people for the five-kilometre race through

downtown Essex.

Recognition was also given to individual volunteers and corporate sponsors.

"The event wouldn't have been possible without the community," DeSantis said. "It's a real team effort."

The successful run also drew fitness enthusiasts from surrounding municipalities.

"It's not just an Essex event anymore," DeSantis said.

With the United Way's announcement last week that it will be cutting even more of its charity funding, DeSantis says that although local fundraising is getting "harder and harder, this event just gets bigger and bigger."

Early last year, the United Way dropped CLEC

as a funding recipient due to financial troubles.

A charitable partnership

Nancy Wallace-Gero, executive director for CLEC, praised the organization's neighbour, Ken Knapp, for his support.

"It's wonderful to have Ken Knapp as a neighbour," she said. "It's a great connection. I brag all across this province about it."

Wallace-Gero called the \$14,500 the "icing" on the cake of a great partnership between the two services.

"It's about showing the community what a charitable partnership can achieve," she said, adding that the money will do a lot for CLEC and the 550 people they support.

"The event lends itself to the spirit of co-operation,"

Knapp said. "It's about contributing in a positive way."

Organizers of the 2007 event will meet next month to begin some early planning for November.

Wallace-Gero said the committee will try to get more cash donations from local businesses and the public this year, to keep their own expenses down.

Some other committee members and volunteers recognized were Bob Blair, Clare Armstrong, Earl Brownell, Ray Jerome, Dodie Wilson, Bob Pinnell, Ted McCabe, Len Turton, Fay DeVries and Cathy Stevens.

Last year's event was one of the highest grossing in its history, falling just shy of the 10th anniversary run when \$15,000 was raised.

Heart research to benefit from soup luncheon

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

An army of ladlers, including Essex 73's players and Mayor Ron McDermott, were also hard at work dishing out bowls filled to their brims to satisfy about 600 appetites.

"This is one of the great assets of living in a small municipality," McDermott said pointing to the full cafeteria. "This all started in Jim Barnett's house, then went to the Essex United church and now look at this!"

The luncheon moved venues to the cafeteria last

year to accommodate a crowd that was increasing annually.

Jim Barnett and his daughter Cindy were recruited to organize the first event four years ago by former Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario employee Carol Wiens.

"The Heart and Stroke has had soup luncheon events in Windsor and Leamington for about 20 years but there wasn't anything else in Essex County," Wiens recalled. "I knew the Barnetts for a while and thought they'd be good to organize another one. The

success of this event is really due to the Barnetts."

Wiens volunteered during the event, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario was represented by area coordinator Diane McKinley.

She said the proceeds will be going toward heart research and health promotion. With two new researchers working at the University of Windsor, much of the funding will remain in the Essex County region, she said.

McKinley says Windsor-Essex has a higher rate of heart disease and stroke

than anywhere in the province. She said this is possibly due to the amount of pollution coming in from the United States.

She also warned that women's heart disease is on the rise and suggests that everyone get their blood pressure checked.

February is National Heart Month and there are a number of blood pressure clinics set up around Essex County and Windsor.

For more information call the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario at 519-254-4345.

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