

Spirit of Christmas is alive and well in York Region

BY AMY WEST
Staff Writer

Buy a candy, give a dog a Christmas. This is the idea behind Alexander Ahland-Strack's fundraising project.

The 11-year-old Newmarket resident wanted to do something to help the animals at the local Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals shelter.

Alexander loves animals and felt although a lot of charities are collecting money during the holiday season, no one seemed to remember animals.

"Every year, we've gone to the Superdogs show and collected all the free samples of dog food. Then we take it to the shelter," said Alexander. "This year, I wanted to do something different and give them money to help."

That something different is in the form of a huge gingerbread house baked by the staff of The Fine Cake Shop on Main Street, Newmarket.

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Above, Sean Sorka, 5, Deana Fields, Polina Vengerova, 4, and Adam Leiberman, 4, sort clothes destined for northern Canadian communities.

According to Ahland-Strack, OSPCA representative Debbie Blanchard was thrilled when Alexander approached her with his idea. She even invited them to come to the Christmas party for the animals held last weekend in Newmarket.

"She said she wanted to meet him and say thank you," said Ahland-Strack.

Alexander's crusade to help the animals is nothing new. At Halloween, he carries a box for donations to the OSPCA and is currently sponsoring a dog through the Humane Society.

"It's \$50 and that helps buy food and stuff for the dog. They even send me a

"I bought a bunch of candy and stuck it on the house," explained Alexander. "People give money and then take a candy."

So far, Alexander's house has raised more than \$100. His goal is \$200.

"He's so proud of his idea and the welcome it has received in our community," said Susanne Ahland-Strack, Alexander's mother and owner of The Fine Cake Shop.

"He even contributed \$20 of his own money to buy the candy."

picture of the dog," he said.

He's hoping to be able to participate in the volunteer dog walking at the new shelter when he reaches the required age of 14. For now, Alexander is happy to make regular trips to the shelter to visit the animals.

Alexander's gingerbread house will remain on display at The Fine Cake Shop, 241 Main St. S., until Christmas.

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