

Sun-Tribune people

HOLIDAY PRIMER

Volunteers, diners catch spirit at Christmas dinner

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Even more than the 400 pounds of potatoes, 40 or 50 turkeys and bushels of vegetables, it's the Christmas spirit that keeps the Stouffville Country Market's annual Christmas Day dinner going.

For a dozen years, volunteers have cheerfully peeled the spuds, roasted the turkeys and hams, stuffed stockings, delivered meals and gifts to seniors and served dinner.

The tradition started by market owner Norm Clements has remained popular. It is open to everyone, particularly those who will be alone at Christmas.

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Each year, about 450 people sit down to a festive Christmas dinner with another 200 meals delivered to seniors in their homes or at retirement and long-term care facilities.

The meal delivered to seniors is accompanied by a small gift and a card, usually hand-decorated by local elementary school children.

Most of the people at the sit-down meal are from the Stouffville area, but some come from Port Perry, Uxbridge, Sutton, Keswick, Markham and Scarborough.

This marks the third year the dinner is being held in EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church.

The festivities begin at 11 a.m. with carol singing led by Dr. John Moore.

The turkey dinner will be served at noon and Santa should arrive around 1 p.m. with presents for the children.

Every year, the community comes

through with donations to defray the \$6,000 it costs to stage the event.

Donations can be made with a cheque to "Santa's Wish Fund." They can be left at the Country Market office, or at the office of EastRidge, 12485 Tenth Line, next door.

There is no charge for the dinner and everyone is welcome, organizer David Knight said.

Rides to the church can be provided for people in the local area who have no other means of transportation.

To volunteer, arrange for a ride or a meal, or for information, call 905-852-3534. Call EastRidge church at 905-640-3911.

Mittens grow on tree in Orchard Park's lobby

The posters you'll see around Orchard Park Public School in Stouffville are courtesy of Lori McGuckin's Grade 4 class.

The students also make the announcements about the school-wide mitten tree project, which started this week.

They're hoping the tree will be full of mitts, hats, scarves and gloves by Dec. 22.

The donations will then be taken to residents of Yellow Brick House, York Region's women and children's shelter.

After reading about how individuals can make a difference, the class wanted to help its community. So in addition to helping with the mitten tree, they're also donating toys to needy children in the area.

Each student had to come up with a plan to earn money at home and discuss it with their parents. The toys they buy with their earnings will then be donated to the Stouffville Lions toy drive.

The tree is in the front lobby of the school at 276 Sunset Blvd. Donations of mittens or knitting wool can be brought to the office. Call 905-640-3552.



Caitlin Leger

Next Generation

Driving message home on drinking

There is more at risk than losing your licence when you decide to drink and drive. Teenagers, especially, have more to lose.

Whether through personal choice or peer pressure, underage drinking and drug use is common in Stouffville and elsewhere.

As serious as that may be, getting behind the wheel while impaired is a whole other story. A new survey finds 19 per cent of teenagers drive under the influence of alcohol, 15 per cent drive after using marijuana, and 7 per cent report driving under the influence of other drugs.

These numbers are shocking. What is it that causes teenagers to drive impaired or get into the car with a clearly intoxicated driver? Is it the lack of transit late at night? Or maybe teenagers don't want their parents to know the state they are in.

How do we reduce impaired driving locally?

Live presentations or videos showing the consequences of getting behind the wheel drunk or high would work, just don't candy coat the message.

A Students Against Drunk Driving chapter at Stouffville District Secondary School would raise awareness and possibly even raise money for families who suffer a loss due to impaired driving.

Don't think this is a problem in Whitchurch-Stouffville? Attend some weekend parties involving young people and you'll see drinks everywhere, people rolling joints and teenagers playing games, such as "shot for shot."

The problem exists here and elsewhere. Now, what are we going to do about it, Stouffville?

Caitlin Leger, 17, is in Grade 12 at Stouffville District Secondary School. She wants to pursue journalism at Ryerson University.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Santa, waving at last Saturday's Kinsmen Santa parade, returns to Stouffville Dec. 25 and not just to deliver Christmas gifts. He'll be a special guest at Stouffville's annual Christmas Day dinner.

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