

Lions beef barbecue end-of-school tradition

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COMING UP

Paul Houston and the rest of the Stouffville Lions will be back in Memorial Park two weeks from tonight for their annual beef barbecue. The service club serves about 1,000 meals at the event while raising money for community projects. Advance tickets are available.



STAFF FILE PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

The aroma of more than 600 pounds of specially seasoned slow roasted beef will blanket Stouffville on Thursday, June 25, as the Stouffville Lions once again fire up the barbecue for their annual roast beef dinner.

For 30 years, the Lions have been hosting the annual event in Memorial Park on the last Thursday in June and no matter the weather, people have come out.

"Last year it was like a hurricane went through here," said Joe Cote, past president of the Lions Club, noting the Lions serve about 1,000 meals every year during the event.

However, the barbecue didn't start out with the intention of being so big.

"It was originally intended for appreciation of the town, involving families to celebrate the last days of school," Mr. Cote said.

However, the aroma of the roast beef's secret spice rub has drawn people to the park from as far away as Pickering and Toronto, which has turned the small town end-of-term celebration into one of the club's biggest fundraisers.

"People know our barbecue and come year after year," said Sharon McClenny, co-chairperson of the barbecue committee and a former president of the Lions.

This year's barbecue won't run during the Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry Festival for a change. The 25th anniversary edition of the festival runs the following week.

Some of the projects the Lions contribute to

throughout the year include the Latham Gallery student program, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library March Break, Willow Springs summer camp and vision screening for junior and senior kindergarten students.

"It goes right back into the community," Ms McClenny said. "Everything we do is for the betterment of the community as a whole."

Roast beef is not the only thing being served up at the barbecue, "however, we don't skimp on the beef; they get lots of beef," Mr. Cote said.

So you better come hungry, because your plate will also be piled high with potato salad, coleslaw, a kaiser roll and tomato. If that were not enough, strawberry shortcake will be served for dessert. Each meal also comes with a drink.

The cost is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and children. For those who just don't like roast beef, there is a hotdog special for \$5, which includes a dessert and a drink.

The annual Stouffville Lions Roast Beef barbecue takes place on Thursday, June 25 from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at Memorial Park.

Tickets can be purchased at Barthau Jewellers, Chas Richards and Sons, Scotia Bank, TD Canada Trust or at the park that day.

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