

Christmas Spirit Alive and Well at EastRidge Missionary Church

By Nancy Hopkins

The spirit of giving and community are alive and well in Stouffville.

For the 11th year in a row area volunteers and businesses are coming together to prepare a free Christmas meal for hundreds of people. Founded by Norm Clements, and formerly held at the Stouffville Country Market, the dinner began as a way to reach out to people in the area who might otherwise be alone and without a Christmas meal.

This year, at noon on Christmas Day, 45 turkeys, 10 hams and all the trimmings will grace the festive tables at EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church at 12485 Tenth Line. For a few hours the Christmas feast will be alive with the chatter of newly-made and renewed friendships and the unmistakable smells and tastes of Christmas.

Newcomers to the community, the elderly and disabled, and people in transition are all welcome to join in. And Santa Claus wouldn't miss this get-together. With a sack of gifts for the children, his sleigh will arrive at 1 p.m., and the Austrian music and dance group the Forget-Me-Nots will once again provide warm, fami-



Austrian Music and dance group The Forget-Me-Nots will provide entertainment at the annual Christmas Dinner at EastRidge Missionary Church

ly-oriented entertainment.

According to long-time volunteer David Knight, "The first year, with the help of volunteers, we served

approximately 200 meals. Last year, we served 500 and delivered over 150 meals to individuals in the community who could not travel to the

church."

Cooking for 700 or more takes time and planning. Preparations at the church start on the Thursday before Christmas. At 3 a.m. on Christmas Day, a hearty bunch of volunteers begin stuffing, seasoning and cooking the feast.

Mr. Knight recently received a call from an elderly resident hopeful the dinner would be happening again this year. Without family in the area, she didn't want to be alone at Christmas.

Phone calls like this and the life stories of the guests who attend, some year after year, are the reason countless volunteers make the Christmas dinner a reality. Mr. Knight proudly credits the community for its generosity. "The community always comes together to make the celebration happen."

The Country Market Christmas dinner is open to anyone who would like to attend. For more information contact David Knight at 905-852-3534. Monetary donations are always welcome and can be dropped off at the Stouffville Country Market office, located next door to EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church.

Bach To Blues Company Christmas Concert

By Luanne Griffin

Join us as we celebrate seven years of beautiful mixed voice harmonies. The Bach to Blues Company and guest artists are presenting a celebration of music beyond borders, a benefit concert supporting the dual causes of the Stephen Lewis Foundation and the Tumaini Clinic in Kenya.

The concert is on Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Christ Church Anglican, 254 Sunset Blvd. Guest artists include vocalist Veronica Jackson playing the lyre (a smaller form of Celtic Harp) and Tim and Maggie Birch on trumpets. Tickets are \$10.

The Bach to Blues Company is a Stouffville and area group of singers dedicated to producing beautiful, mixed-voice harmonies through a challenging and varied repertoire of music from the 16th to the 20th century. We share our love of vocal music by participat-

ing in concerts that both entertain and help raise funds for noble causes.

Founded in 1998, we accept members from all vocal ranges and training, from beginners to accom-

plished readers. All we ask from our members is commitment.

Currently there are 29 members in the company, and we're always ready to welcome more.



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