

School breakfast program receives healthy donation from Shelburne Home Hardware

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

It's a well known fact that being hungry interferes with your ability to concentrate, and if you're a student those hunger pains can translate to poor grades and a lack of focus in the classroom.

Around 500 students take part in the School Breakfast program daily at Shelburne area schools including four elementary schools and one high school.

Students take part in the program for a variety of reasons. What used to be thought of as a program to help feed disadvantaged kids is now seen as a positive program that helps everyone from kids who haven't eaten to someone running late and couldn't get breakfast at home.

Home Hardware in Shelburne has stepped up to help fund the program by matching donations given by contractors and customers at their Steeles St. location.

This year the store raised a total of \$15,000, including the donation from the store, allowing each school to receive \$3,000. Over the past four years the local program has raised \$55,000.

People who donate at the store are given a paper plate to write their name on and the plate is attached to a wall with the current donation total.

Store owner Bill Gillam started the program after reaching out to the Town to ask what program he could help out with that will make a difference.

“Over the past four years we've raised \$52,500 - \$29,960 from customers, \$29,040 from the store, and \$1,500 from the barbecue,” Mr. Gillam explained. “I talked to the Town and asked “what's something I can help with that's underfunded. They told me the breakfast program needs some help because they are running a deficit. It costs \$1.75 per kid per day.”

Several other businesses also help out by selling products at below normal retail prices.

Mr. Gillam makes sure that all donations given through and from the store are contributed directly to local schools.

“Everything I've given comes directly back here,” Mr. Gillam said. “In order for me to get the money back here I give it to the Children's Foundation which includes the Wellington Guelph area but everything is funneled back here. I said I'm not doing this unless the money goes back to our local schools.”

Program coordinator, Kit Stewart organizes breakfast at Glenbrooke Elementary School in Shelburne and said the program is very popular.

“All the schools have nutrition programs. At Glenbrooke we do breakfast in a room where the kids can come in if they need it,” Ms. Stewart explained. “Sometimes it's kids who don't have lunch. Sometimes it's kids who don't have anyone at home to do breakfast. A lot of people commute and leave early. There's almost as many reasons for kids to be in the room as there are kids in the room.”

The money raised and donated to the program means no kids in our local schools will hear the first bell ring on an empty stomach.