

# Giving back

By BRIAN LOCKHART

There won't be any tasty ribs at the Orangeville Ribfest this summer. The Rotary Club of Orangeville has announced that due to the current situation, planning the event has become next to impossible.

Ribfest is the main fundraiser for the Orangeville branch of the Rotary Club so they definitely will be feeling the loss.

Already cancelled this year was the Home and Garden Show sponsored by the Orangeville Lion's Club.

This was another event that was well attended and brought in big bucks for the Lions.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin and District had to cancel their annual Bowl for Kids Sake event that they hold every spring.

The event raises around a third of their annual operating budget.

The same situation will be true for every town across this province.

So what do all these organizations have in common?

They all put the funds they raise and their resources back into the community by funding different projects, activities, and by helping local people.

If you have been following the list of annual events that have now been cancelled due to the corona virus pandemic you will know the list is long ? and growing.

The popular Orangeville Blues and Jazz festival, one of my personal favourites has been cancelled.

Organizers explained that the festival takes month of planning and not having the ability to work together to get the festival organized made it impossible to continue.

Also cancelled is the Celebrate Your Awesome event, which celebrates all different lifestyles and people. It is a smaller festival but it is still a lot of fun and growing every year.

There are probably more events that have been cancelled that I'm not aware of, or even others that will still be cancelled during the summer that are currently perched precariously on a scale of 'do we plan ahead, or not?'

All these festivals provide income for the town. With thousands of people turning out on festival days from both the region and other towns and cities, they pump a lot of cash into the the local economy when visiting.

All that money is going to be missed by both local businesses and organizations.

When this current situation is over, maybe we all can help recoup some of the losses.

Playgrounds don't magically appear. Sports venues don't spring up on their own.

Many of the popular places in our region are there because service clubs and supporting sponsor organizations raise the needed funds through their activities including festivals of different kinds.

There is an old saying that 'charity begins at home.'

There is a lot of truth to that. You can't help the world until you have your own house in order. When your own house is crumbling, you have to fix it and keep your family safe before you work on your neighbor's home.

We can't let our world crumble due to this setback. Sooner or later, hopefully sooner, we will be back to normal.

So maybe when this current chaos is over we can all take a look at our own personal situation and vow to give back a little to support all those causes that have been put on hold.

For the most part, organizations that support local causes utilize their funds in the most appropriate and worthwhile fashion.

You won't see the president of the local Lions Club outfitting his new boat with Club funds. Members are all volunteers and spend their time working on projects and making the community a better place.

That goes with pretty much every local service organization that channels its efforts and funds toward improving the community and creating new projects that benefit us all.

Maybe you've saved a few bucks on gas because you've been working at home and haven't had to make your daily commute. Maybe you've discovered a few ways to save money while battling through this current situation.

It doesn't take much from one single person if everyone bands together and throws a few dollars into the pot.

You can help build that next community project or contribute to ensure a kid has a mentor that will help them through difficult times.

If you were planning on attending the Ribfest or any other festival with the family and spending money on dinner, rides, and nick-nacks at the vendor booths, you could contribute that money or part of it to the organization where you would have been enjoying yourself.

Every little helps.