

Senior's Santa Christmas Stockings Program returns

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A Dufferin County based organization is working to bring some Christmas magic to local seniors this holiday season.

Senior's Santa Christmas Stockings Program have begun collecting donation items for their annual initiative that looks to give stockings stuffed with gifts to local seniors living in long-term care homes, retirement facilities or within the community.

Organizer of the annual fundraiser, Julie Evason said their goal is to make sure no senior in the community is forgotten by Santa during the holidays.

"Getting their stocking gives some that little something to look forward to," said Evason. "That's my goal, to bring a smile and give them a little bit of Christmas magic because this program has given that back to me."

While the Senior's Santa Christmas Stockings Program began in 2015, Evason joined the initiative four years ago, taking over as organizer. For her the initiative has a deep personal connection.

After losing both her parents and grandparents at a young age, Evason said Christmas no longer had meaning for her until she had her children. Working with seniors and in palliative care, she recalls seeing that same loss of meaning for Christmas as she did in her own life.

"Seeing the seniors without family really hit home for me so it became about giving seniors something to look forward to," said Evason. "I've seen what it does to our seniors, and how much joy it brings to some."

The annual initiative works by having local residents fill stockings with a variety of gifts and donating them. Those stockings are then sorted through and distributed on Christmas Day (Dec. 25) to long-term care homes and retirement facilities including Dufferin Oaks, Shelburne Long Term Care Home & Retirement Community, Avalon, Bethsaida, and the Lord Dufferin Centre.

Evason said two locations this year, will be receiving monetary donations (gift cards) to purchase the stocking items themselves due to COVID-19 protocols.

The initiative also offers residents the opportunity to be a sponsor for a senior, where they buy items specific to the person for the stocking, and a Christmas dinner is provided to the senior. Senior's Santa Christmas Stockings Program is also hosting an online auction with funds going towards gift cards and remaining stocking fillers.

According to Evason, the initiative has 782 seniors in the community thus far, who will be receiving a stocking.

Specific items asked for in stuffing the stockings include toiletries such as soap, lotion, lip balm, brushes and toothpaste as well as beauty products such as nail polish. The initiative is also accepting other items such as slippers, sweets, and Christmas cards, but asks that metal nail clippers/files and alcohol not be included.

Senior's Santa Christmas Stockings Program has a number of donation location in Shelburne and Orangeville including Marg McCarthy Real Estate Services, 98 Church Street, Orangeville Optometric Centre, Anytime Fitness, Highland DKI, and Lorie Haddock Re/Max Real Estate Centre.

The initiative will be accepting donations until Dec. 15. Senior's Santa Christmas Stockings Program can be contacted by phone at

519-215-8485 or by email at seniorsantastockings@gmail.com