

Orangeville Fire Department defeats Dufferin OPP in charity hockey game

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

Two local emergency services recently laced up their skates and squared off in a good-spirited game of hockey.

The Dufferin OPP faced the Orangeville Fire Department on the ice at the Tony Rose Memorial Sports in Orangeville on Saturday, March 16. The event didn't only provide a spectacle to the roughly 800 attendees who filled out the arena, it also raised \$7,500 and counting for the Orangeville Food Bank and Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS). The funds were split evenly between the two organizations.

"This event is about community engagement and coming together to support a cause much greater than the game? to support two organizations that work to support and uplift families and children in need within Dufferin County," said the Dufferin OPP in a press release.

At the final buzzer, the score was 6-2 for the Orangeville Fire Department.

The event saw fantastic community spirit with a packed arena, said Amy-Lynn Pitton, Dufferin OPP's community liaison officer.

"The crowd was electric, cheering on both sides," said Pitton. "Seeing our families and friends interacting with the community we serve, specifically so many youths in attendance was magic."

The charity hockey game was held, in part, to address the impact that the pandemic had on emergency services' community partners and the people of Dufferin County that they serve, said Pitton.

"Though we are often working very closely with these partners, we all felt the need to try and do a little bit more, beyond our regular course of duties as police and fire. Our goal wasn't just to play a game of hockey, but to play for a purpose, and this purpose was to bring awareness and support to two community partners that do so much to support families here in Dufferin," said Pitton.

"This Charity Hockey Game is about community engagement and uniting two emergency services with the people they serve. This initiative provided us with the opportunity to have positive interactions with community members whilst showing our support and admiration not only for each other as fire and police, but the community partners in which we choose ? the food bank and DCAFS," she added.

Orangeville Councillor Joe Andrews did the ceremonial puck drop with Dufferin?Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones. He said it was great to see so many people out to support the game, particularly youth.

"Prior to game-time, I was standing at the front door to the arena and there was a long line-up along Northman Way waiting to get in. It's been some time since I've seen this at a local hockey game," said Andrews. "The number of children who were on-site cheering the teams on, especially those with posters, was inspirational."

He added that it was a fierce match-up between the two emergency services.

"The competitiveness between the two teams (Orangeville Fire & OPP) was intense," Andrews said. "I know from playing hockey that competitive juices flow, and I saw that first hand between the two benches ? Orangeville Fire and OPP."

He noted that it was an honour to be asked to co-drop the ceremonial puck with MPP Jones and offered his congratulations to the two emergency services for organizing such a successful event.

?It took a lot of time to put this game together and to see just how successful it was means that there must be a rematch in 2025,? Andrews enthused. ?The event might even need to be relocated next year to the Alder Complex which has a larger seating capacity. The winners weren't just on the ice, but DCAFS and the Orangeville Food Bank! And a big thank you to the Orangeville Lions Clubs and the other organizations who made it the event it was.?

Dufferin OPP and Orangeville Fire hope to make the charity hockey game an annual event.