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Centre Dufferin New Horizons Club receives federal funds to enhance services

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Centre Dufferin New Horizons Club is expanding its programming for local seniors after receiving $16,754 in funding through the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program. The funds allow the organization to launch new activities and educational events to keep older adults active, informed and socially connected.

The club is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization that has been serving adults aged 55 and older in Shelburne and the surrounding area since 1978.

The funding, as part of its Expanding Horizons project, was announced during its first Lunch and Learn event on May 7.

Cindy Sabo, one of the club's board members, said that the new initiatives will support eight Lunch and Learn sessions along with two new weekly programs focused on physical activity and social engagement.

?With this funding, we're introducing eight Lunch and Learns, and this is actually our first one, and we're also introducing two new weekly activities to get everyone up and moving,? she said. ?Line dancing [started] up on May 11, and we're going to be having Tai Chi-Qigong classes starting May 14.?

Club representatives said the funding will help expand opportunities for social dining and educational programming by bringing in guest speakers on topics relevant to seniors. These discussions will focus on elder abuse prevention, oral health, fraud and scams, winter driving safety, community paramedic programs, volunteer income tax assistance and fire safety in the home.

The first Lunch and Learn featured Shelburne and District Fire Chief Dave Pratt, who delivered a presentation focused on residential fire safety, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and the growing risks associated with lithium-ion batteries.

Pratt also highlighted the importance of properly functioning smoke alarms and encouraged residents to contact the fire department whenever they have concerns about home safety.

The funding announcement also drew praise from local officials, including Dufferin County Warden Lisa Post, who attended the luncheon to congratulate the club on securing the grant.

Post acknowledged the amount of work involved in completing funding applications and said the additional support would help grow programs that benefit seniors across the community.

I just want to congratulate all of you on that achievement of getting additional funding,? she said. ?I know that those applications are extremely tedious and time-consuming, so congratulations on your success with that. I look forward to the growth of the programs here. Being from Orangeville, we've got a great senior center in Orangeville as well with lots of activities, and I've heard nothing but wonderful things about the center here.?

?I know with the growth and addition of this funding, the programs here are going to grow and are going to be extraordinary, and all of you are really going to enjoy them,? Post added.

A letter from Kyle Seeback was also shared during the event. In the letter, Seeback congratulated the organization on receiving the funding and recognized the club's long-standing efforts to provide social and recreational opportunities for seniors in the region.

?I'm writing to congratulate all of you on the recent New Horizons for Seniors Program funding to support your Expanding Horizons project,? Seeback wrote. ?I understand this project will support the club's efforts to expand its horizons with Lunch and Learns as well as two new weekly programs. The inclusion of speakers in this initiative addressing topics ranging from elder abuse to oral health is important for the senior community.?

The letter continued, ?Your exceptional volunteerism is greatly appreciated on behalf of the residents. Congratulations again on receiving this funding support to continue your outstanding efforts to ensure our local senior community remains active and engaged.?

The Expanding Horizons project marks the latest chapter in the Centre Dufferin New Horizons Club's nearly five decades of service, reinforcing its role as a hub for connection, learning and support for older adults in Shelburne and surrounding communities.

With new funding in place and fresh programming set to roll out in the coming weeks, the club's volunteers and partners plan to remain focused on ensuring local seniors have accessible, meaningful opportunities to stay active, engaged and informed.