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Dufferin Community Foundation announces Arts and Culture, Environmental Fund Grants

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The Dufferin Community Foundation (DCF) has awarded its 2023 fall grants to five recipients.

The local community foundation announced in a press release last Thursday (Dec. 7) that four local charities and one township had been awarded their first-ever Arts and Culture Fund and Environment Fund grants.

?I feel privileged to be part of such a caring organization, and on a team that provides and grants funds to other caring community organizations,? said Shirley Boxem, chair of Dufferin Community Foundation's Grants Committee. ?Our team worked hard to facilitate this process in a fair and uncomplicated way. Reading the applications and learning about the amazing projects and efforts going on around us is always an inspiration.?

The Arts and Culture Fund was awarded to four local charities ? Active Lives Canada, Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County, Community Living Dufferin, and Trinity United Church Shelburne.

The Arts and Culture Fund provides grants to organizations that advance the public's appreciation and awareness of the arts, community heritage and cultural traditions taking place within Dufferin County.

This year, each charity received a grant of $2,500 for projects that promote diversity, equity and inclusion through the arts in Dufferin County.

Active Lives Canada will be using the funds to initiate ?Special Puppets', a project that looks to use the art of puppetry to empower adults with special needs. Head Puppeteer Yolanda Yott will guide a group of individuals in expressing themselves through puppetry, offering a therapeutic channel to share personal stories. The program will also provide an opportunity to educate children about special needs through performances at schools and community theatre.

?The program aims to break down barriers and celebrate the talents and abilities of individuals with special needs,? read the press release.

Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County will apply the grant to ?Singing for Health', an intergenerational choir pilot project designed as a safe and friendly environment for anyone who loves to sing. Guided by a music therapist, the goal of the program is to reduce the social isolation of older adults and those with disabilities and provide a space where families can have positive experiences regardless of age or diagnosis. The choir will meet weekly to learn and practice songs from a variety of genres, and at the end of the pilot program, they will perform the songs at a venue in Orangeville.

The program is a collaboration between the Alzheimer Society of Dufferin and Julia's Place Music Therapy.

?This project is more than just a musical endeavor, it's a celebration of inclusivity and expression designed to bring the joy of music to everyone. For our clients, it's a unique opportunity to engage with the community and express themselves through the beauty of song and music,? said executive director Carmelina Cicuto.

Community Living Dufferin will be utilizing the support from the grant for their project, ?Creative Partners On Stage.' Through ?Creative Partners On Stage,' actors with intellectual disabilities work alongside professional writers, directors and choreographers to create original productions to be performed on stage twice a year at Theatre Orangeville.

The grant will go towards offsetting stage production costs for their next show, ?Murder at the Talent Show,' which will be a murder mystery dinner fundraiser in collaboration with three local restaurants. The show will run from May 17 to May 19.

?This is so exciting, and this group of actors are so deserving of the community's support for their hard work,? said Karen Murphy-Fritz, executive assistant with Community Living Dufferin. ?[The grant] provides tremendous support in offsetting some of the production costs associated with putting on such great theatre.?

Trinity United Church Shelburne will put the grant funding to use to host their ?Spirit Touches Art Touches Spirit (stARTS) event. ?Spirit Touches Art Touches Spirit will be a day-long celebration of the arts and diversity, including live performances and visual art galleries. The intent of the spring 2024 initiatives is to attract and gather the artistic diversity in the Shelburne area and promote inclusivity through the arts. The event will be free for all to attend.

Dufferin Community Foundation's first-ever Environmental Fund grant was given to the Township of Melancthon and North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT).

The Environmental Fund grant is aimed at organizations taking innovative approaches to community-based environmental management, including technological advances, environmental education and stewardship of land and natural resources.

The Township of Melancthon and NDACT received $3,000 through the grant, which will be directed toward peer review of data in collaboration with Strada Aggregate.

When Strada Aggregate Inc. planned to dig below the water table on their pit in Melancthon, NDACT and the aggregate operator developed a Community Engagement Agreement to act as a conduit between Strada, the peer reviewer, and the community. A key activity of that agreement is to reach property owners with private wells and have them register to a database for well monitoring in order to establish a baseline to determine any adverse effects should a quarry proceed.

The hope of the model between NDACT and Strada is to cultivate further