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Ebenezer opens doors to refugees

There are some messages that are so beautifully crafted, they bear repeating.

That's the opinion of local actor Andrew Welch, who is also Orangeville's acting Town Crier. So when he was approached to recreate his one-man dramatic rendition of Dickens' timeless classic ?A Christmas Carol? to raise funds for the Syrian refugees, he immediately jumped at the opportunity.

On Monday, December 14th, the St. Mark's Anglican Church will host a spell-binding two hours of suspense, Christmas magic, extraordinary characters, and captivating energy.

All proceeds will go to the Headwaters Refugee Sponsorship Committee ? an established local charity that has been working since February to bring a Syrian family of four to Orangeville from Jordan where they fled, shortly after the outbreak of the civil war. The family's paperwork is complete and they are awaiting security clearance. Now the group is fundraising to support the family's needs for one year.

Welch's ambitious goal is fill the church and raise at least $2000. So why an admission at the door of only $5?

?I really want this show to be accessible to families and the whole community,? he says. ?It also allows people to make significant donations that can be recognized with a tax receipt, if desired. I believe generosity inspires generosity in return.?

Welch is no stranger to this international effort. As a member of the Red Cross Disaster Management team, he is awaiting imminent deployment to manage the processing of the 10,000 refugees expected to arrive in Canada before the end of the year.

?A lot of people in our community have been asking how they could help,? said the actor, who has performed this show to great acclaim in Canada and the U.S. for years. ?Here's a way to start, and to learn a bit more about what's needed.?

A second show will take place at Erin United Church on December 16, where it has become an annual fundraising tradition, with proceeds going to a local Erin group.

Here's how one teenager described the inaugural show in 2013: ?The performance Andrew delivered on that cold December night was truly unlike any dramatic display I'd ever seen. The passion, the emotion, the rhythm, the delivery, everything was flawless. He engaged me immediately, and didn't lose my attention at any point throughout. The accents, the enunciation, every subtle vocal nuance, were executed to perfection?one of the most memorable experiences of my Christmas vacation.?

St. Mark's Anglican Church is located at 5 First Avenue, Orangeville, and the performance begins at 7 p.m.