

Lions Club supports Theatre Orangeville with \$5,000 donation

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Theatre Orangeville is getting a much-appreciated boost to its operations, as the Orangeville Lions Club recently donated money from its bingo fund to help support the arts in town.

"It came out of nowhere for me; we're absolutely thrilled to accept it," said Jennifer Stewart, artistic director for Theatre Orangeville. "It's just wonderful to be supported so much by the community and the Lions Club."

She continued, "This money is going right into our programming at the theatre. We're truly honoured."

Stewart said that every dollar is a great help to the theatre, which is still working "slowly but surely" to recover its income and viewer base from the pandemic. Any and all support, whether that's coming from individual supporters or other clubs and organizations like the Lions Club, is greatly appreciated by the theatre.

"Donations are greatly appreciated at this time, especially as we're still recovering from COVID-19 and the drop we saw," Stewart said. "But I can say we're up the upward slope, things are getting better. Every boost just helps us get up that hill."

She continued by saying that support during the fall and winter seasons is crucial.

"Donations like this really show us how special our community is," Stewart said. "People need laughter and joy in their lives, especially this time of year. We need more laughter and joy."

Sharyn Ayliffe, the theatre's executive director, agreed.

"This is what makes organizations like the Lions Club so special," she said. "All the service clubs in town are extremely generous, of course. But the Lions Club really understands the profound impact that arts and culture have on a community, and that's a very special thing that I think gets overlooked."

"It's something that we can take for granted, our books, TV, films, theatre, music, etc., until it's gone. Then it's just the void that people notice."

Ayliffe said that the money from this donation will go straight back into the theatre to help fund its Creative Partners on Stage program, a program specifically designed for adults with neurodiversities.

Creative Partners on Stage actors work directly with directors and choreographers to create two new and original scripts every year, made with the support of Theatre Orangeville's production team and the accredited support workers of Community Living Dufferin.

The Orangeville Lions Club members said they love supporting the creative arts in town.

Orangeville Lion Dan Roach said they are consistently impressed by the theatre's hard work.

"The Lions Club is very community involved," he said. "Arts and culture is very important, and thankfully very well run in our town and very well received. We want to continue playing a part in that, so this is our way of helping to contribute."

"The Orangeville Theatre is the headstone of arts and culture in this town, and it's very important to us that we're involved; they are

absolutely a worthy cause to support," Roach added.

He continued by saying on a personal level, he has always enjoyed the high quality of productions put on by the theatre, and said that the experience is like no other.

"For a small town, you know, the shows are so well done, so professionally made. My wife and I have seen shows here. Even the venue itself is second to none. There's so many things there for you to see and enjoy."

The Lions Club is just one in a long line of supporters who continue to help the theatre do what it does best - deliver quality entertainment right in the heart of Orangeville for all to see.