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Local grocers honoured for outstanding community support

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Three local grocery leaders have been formally recognized for their exceptional support of food security initiatives and community programs in Shelburne, each receiving the Shelburne Community Excellence Award.

The Town of Shelburne honoured the charitable efforts of local grocers Jimmy and Stefanie Cerasani, alongside Raff Cerasani, for their ongoing contributions to community support, particularly in addressing food insecurity.

Nominated by the Shelburne Food Bank, the group received the Community Excellence Award from Mayor Wade Mills and council during its March 23 regular meeting. Ardith Dunlop, coordinator for the local food bank, said they have been supporters from almost day one.

?Soon after Jimmy & Stef and Raff started in this community, they notified us of their interest and intention to support us,? she said. ?They came for a visit to the foodbank, asked questions and then became more involved.?

Over the past two years, Dunlop said that the Cerasanis have become key partners of the Shelburne Food Bank and a wide range of community organizations.

After an initial visit to better understand the food bank's operations and needs, they established consistent support through regular food donations, food rescue efforts, and active participation in charitable initiatives. They also helped champion projects for the food bank as well.

?They were one of the first sponsors of the Shelburne Foodbank's Food Rescue Van,? Dunlop said. ?Through consistent generosity, many seasonal food drives that engage the community and a deep sense of social responsibility, Jimmy and Stef have demonstrated what it means to be community leaders. Raff provides exceptional weekly support. He ensures that the food bank orders go in and organizes them all for pickup, ensuring that our shelves are full and ready each week.?

Their contributions have supported numerous local efforts, including the EDC golf tournament, Halloween community events, Rotary Club projects, school breakfast and snack programs, and youth sports organizations. Their store has also become a central hub for community giving, hosting multiple food drives each year and organizing in-store donation collections at the tills.

In addition to donating substantial quantities of food, the group plays a hands-on role in local events such as charity runs, seasonal fairs, and youth activities.

Dunlop said that they also work closely with the food bank to integrate food rescue into daily operations, adjusting orders to prioritize high-need items and coordinating consistent weekly donations. Surplus and near-dated products are redirected to reduce waste while increasing available supplies for residents in need.

Their combined efforts reflect a sustained and coordinated commitment to strengthening food security and supporting the well-being of the Shelburne community.

As demand for food support continues to grow, the recognition highlights the important role local businesses play in sustaining community services.

Through their ongoing partnership with the Shelburne Food Bank and broader community involvement, the Cerasanis have

strengthened the town's capacity to respond to food insecurity, set a standard for local leadership and giving, and helped build the town's capacity to respond to food insecurity.