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Local seniors group performs ?The Great Christmas Cookie Caper?

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A local senior social group is presenting a short theatrical production tonight (Dec. 18) to help build social confidence and promote engagement.

In an effort to stay engaged, foster a sense of community, and build friendships, a local group of seniors in Shelburne has been hard at work putting together a short play, titled The Great Christmas Cookie Caper, as the culmination of their efforts.

Suzette Daley, organizer of the seniors group, said that the play began to take shape after a meeting held over the summer.

?Our play came together after a Seniors Workshop Information Session held in August with Carol Maitland from the town's EDC (Economic Development Committee); Kurtis Krepps, manager (of) community support services; and Marissa Marr, supervisor of community support services,? she said. ?What I heard during the workshop was incredibly meaningful.?

She explained that the session created a space for meaningful conversations with seniors about their experiences in Shelburne, what helps them feel connected, what they hope to see in the community, and how they can play a more active role in shaping local programs and events for them.

The response was strong. Seniors around town are looking for ways to stay connected and engaged, especially in group settings.

?Participants shared how much they value opportunities to stay engaged, contribute their ideas, and feel a genuine sense of belonging in the community,? Daley said. ?Their feedback reminded us how important it is to create programs that bring people together and highlight the strengths and stories of all generations.?

Daley then considered how she could bring that kind of activity to fruition while keeping it fun, fresh and engaging. She then considered the possibility of a community play, and after bringing together multiple groups of seniors from around town, and some extra help from schools, the production began to take off.

?I wanted to do a fun, creative project that allowed participants to express themselves, work as a team, and feel connected to one another and to the broader community,? she said. ?I was able to bring together two groups, one from the McKelvie Burnside Village building and one from the Simon St. building, along with enthusiastic students from Centennial Hylands Elementary School and Primrose Elementary School.?

After some time spent setting up, planning, and rehearsing the production, Daley said the seniors were finally ready to perform their play. And now, as the dust settles, she said they are already looking for more.

?The participants have poured their hearts into this project, and they are so excited to share it,? she said. ?It has been beautiful to see how much joy, confidence, and connection this experience has brought to everyone involved. Although this is their first production, the ladies have already made it clear: this won't be their last.?

?They've discovered how much they enjoy performing and working together, and they are eager to continue creating more plays in the future,? Daley added.

This excitement was indeed mirrored by the participants. Several seniors praised the production, saying it was a fun opportunity to get out and about.

?A big thanks to Suzette for getting us active and mobile,? said Donna, who's acting in The Great Christmas Cookie Caper. ?These are two things people of our age need to be doing. We hope anyone who comes to see our Christmas play did not go home disappointed. We may have some projects in the New Year.?

?We are so thankful for our little group,? said Jan, who's also acting in the play. ?It really has gotten most of us out of our homes and into the light of new friends and adventures. Can't wait to see what the future brings! It's wonderful not to be forgotten.?

?It's been a good way to get out of the daily routines,? said Joan, another actor in the play. ?We are slowly coming out of our shells and into a new lease on life.?

The seniors and the team behind this production have committed themselves unequivocally to the production, and the positive effects have already begun to manifest before the performance even occurred. The seniors feel energized and happier, getting the chance to make new friends, try new things and get out into the world again.

That feeling of happiness and fulfilment can't be replicated.