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Making a ?blue? Christmas brighter

For many in Dufferin County, Christmas will not be the happiest time of the year. The good news is there are organizations and churches in Dufferin County trying to bring hope to those having a ?blue Christmas.?

Dufferin County Community Support Service (DCCSS) located in the Mel Lloyd Centre, at 167 Centre Street, in Shelburne assists seniors and physically challenged adults to remain in the familiarity of their homes. Services include a range of community support services; individual and personalized service plans developed through home visits; linking clients to appropriate community resources; and access to Community Health and Education Clinics. They can be reached at 519 925-2140 ext. 5235.

Seniors' Santa Christmas Hampers-Dufferin County will be making Christmas brighter for over 450 seniors again this year. In Shelburne, drop offs include Sutton Group at 117 Owen Sound Street, Manax Plumbing Store at 137 Main Street, and Shelburne Auto and Cycle at 713 Industrial Road. In 2014, the Seniors' Santa Hamper Program expanded to include ?Adopt a Senior,? for seniors who are home bound. For more information visit www.seniorsanta.ca or call 519 341-4581.

The Shelburne Christmas Hamper Food & Toy drive is accepting food and new, unwrapped toys from December 14th to 18th at the Mel Lloyd Community Meeting Room, 167 Centre Street in Shelburne from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Salvation Army located on 690 Riddell Road in Orangeville, assists with emergency food and clothing; emergency accommodation and transportation; transitional housing; Christmas food hampers; Christmas toy centre for children up to age 14; support services and referral; and summer camp opportunities for children. The Salvation Army can be reached at 519 943-1203.

Centre Dufferin New Horizons Seniors' Club, located at the Mel Lloyd Centre, has many activities to keep seniors active. Regional ministers and pastors offer outreach and pastoral care from their churches. Dufferin Oaks in Shelburne is just one of the area seniors' residences that encourages volunteer visitors ? to help call 519 925-5067.

Family Transition Place is offering a free ?Coping with the Holidays? workshop for those ?grieving the recent loss of a loved one, spending the special days far from family and friends, or stressed over money.? Their message, ?Although the holidays can be difficult, you can take care of yourself and try to stay hopeful.? Transition Place asks those in need join them for coffee and conversation Tuesday, December 15 from 1:30?3 p.m. at Family Transition Place, 20 Bredin Parkway, Orangeville. RVSP is required ? call Samantha at 519 942-4122 ext. 239.

A ?Blue Christmas? service, hosted by Covenant Alliance Church and The Message Church, will be held Dec. 21st from 7?8 p.m. at the seniors' centre, 26 Blythia Street in Orangeville. Organizers say, ?Whether you are feeling blue, have lost a loved one, or are unable to recover your health or job the service provides a coming together of people who understand that life has seasons of sadness and that grief needs room to breathe in safe places.? For more information call 519 941-2707.

Area churches are reaching out to the community. At Trinity United Church, 200 Owen Sound Street in Shelburne, the Christmas Eve Service will be held at 7 p.m. on December 24th with music provided by Greg Holmes and friends. The church will also have a Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols at Primrose United Church at 7 p.m. on December 20th.

Compass Community Church services will be held at CDDHS at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings for their holiday series Christmas Classics. They will be celebrating the redeeming spiritual themes in such holiday classics as It's a Wonderful Life, The Grinch, Polar Express, A Christmas Carol and Charlie Brown Christmas. They also offer fun Christmas programming at Compass Kids. Candle Light Christmas Eve Services will be held at their Orangeville site on Highway 10, Dec. 24th at 2 p.m., 4 p.m. or 7 p.m. Everyone is invited.

The Covenant Alliance Church 3 Zina St. Orangeville is holding a Christmas Eve service and asks the community to ?enjoy a coffee along with some Christmas singing, a Christmas story from CBC's the Vinyl Café, reading and an opportunity to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas? on December 24th from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Hockley Valley Bible Chapel is having a Christmas Eve service the evening of Dec. 24th at 7 p.m.

Faith Community Wesleyan Church will hold a Christmas dinner following church December 13th at 1 p.m. Tickets are $12. RSVP to carlmoulton@rocketmail.com. On December 24th at 6 p.m., the church will hold a family friendly Candle Light Christmas Eve service featuring traditional Christmas music. December 27th at 11 a.m. is Gratitude Sunday; ?Come and share what you are grateful for in 2015. There will be no sermon, but all are welcome to come and share their blessings.?

As individuals, letting go of the busyness, frees up time to check in on the health of elderly friends and family, listen to their stories, decorate their rooms, deliver treats, or perhaps bring the light of a child into their lives to share memories and make new ones. By simplifying the season and keeping the focus on what really matters ? people, we begin to engage in its true purpose.

By Marni Walsh