

Shoes4Shelburne and Coats for Dufferin keeps community warm

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Two annual initiatives have successfully distributed clothing items and footwear to help residents in need stay warm this winter.

Shoes4Shelburne and Coats for Dufferin hosted two campaigns on Nov. 13 and Nov. 14 at the Mel Lloyd Centre in Shelburne, where they distributed winter apparel and footwear to residents in need.

Shoes4Shelburne was started in 2016 by local chiropractor Dr. Richard Magder and his wife Alexandra Georgie from Shelburne Family Chiropractic. It is an annual initiative focused on providing new and gently used shoes to Shelburne and Dufferin County residents in need.

The inspiration for the campaign came after a pair of Dr. Magder's shoes were stolen when left outside to dry.

Through their 8th annual campaign, Shoes4Shelburne was able to help more than 100 families.

"It's an honour to be able to support the community, especially during a time when the economy is very challenging and there's a lot of families that are feeling the stress and burden," said Alexandra Georgie, co-founder of Shoes4Shelburne. "We're just really happy that we're able to be there to support families and individuals that need good footwear because good footwear leads to good foot health, which helps your overall body."

This year, Shoes4Shelburne was significantly supported by a private donor who helped provide brand-new kids' shoes.

Georgie said the private donation allowed the local initiative to be generous and distribute multiple pairs of footwear to each family with growing children to support them all year round.

During the two-day event, Coats for Dufferin was able to provide close to 150 coats to individuals in the community.

"It's so wonderful that we have a really generous community, and this has been by far the biggest year of collections we've ever had. It makes us feel amazing that we're able to help them, but at the same time it's bittersweet because there's so much need in our community," said Jacqueline Clement, operator of Coats for Dufferin.

Coats for Dufferin is an amalgamation of two previous initiatives; Stay Warm Shelburne, which was started in 2022 by Shelburne-based realtors Claire Knight and Dave Crowe; and Coats for Kids, started by Clement in 2021. In 2023, the two initiatives joined together to address the need for winter outdoor wear for adults and children.

Since starting the coat collection, Coats for Dufferin has been able to provide nearly every elementary school in Dufferin County with a closet full of winter gear and coats for students to access.

Clement said the response and donations provided by community members were "overwhelming" with the initiative collection being double what they had previously received.

Coats for Dufferin will be holding another event run by Sarah DeBoer and Jessica Menard on Dec. 2 at Physiomed Orangeville, located at 170 Lakeview Ct., from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.