

Celebrating the volunteers of Missisquoi North



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

Last Friday evening, the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre, the CAB, in Potton celebrated its volunteers from the area and beyond who give of their time, talents and heart in making the many programs of the centre a success.

The non-profit charitable organiza-

tion noted the hard work and time given by individuals who take part on a variety of its committees including: SADD and FYI at the Youth Centre, Ken Jones Centre, Nutri Sante, Partage/Share, Youth Support, Human Resources, Property, Income Tax Clinic, CIA project, ED Support, Wednesday Drop-in, Viactive, Reception, drivers (medical appointments), Christmas basket "elves", and members of the Board of Directors and all of the many other volunteers who make the CAB programs, events and activities happen.

While CAB president Fiona Campbell was unable to attend, she sent a speech that was delivered by board members Denise McLafferty and Jacques Marcoux, in which she said, "A great big thank you to you all, our incredible volunteers who devote your time, energy and talents to helping others. Yes, that is what you do and through your efforts, you

make our world a better place."

The many volunteers who gathered were treated to "wings and things" as well as a variety of beverages including "mocktails" (cocktails without the alcohol) prepared by the youth from the CAB's SADD committee.

CAB board and FYI member, Carol McGovern prepared a presentation of photos that celebrated the many ways that the organization's volunteers work so hard in the community and beyond.

The CAB staff was in attendance greeting volunteers in their "yellow CAB hats" and were so inspired by and grateful to the volunteers that they grabbed cheerleader pompoms and gave three cheers for all of the volunteers who give of their time to the CAB.

"I am going to ask you to do one more thing for the CAB," Campbell concluded, "please, can each of you try to bring in one more volunteer to replen-

ish our ranks? We need more volunteers..." She added, "By the way, it has been shown that volunteers live longer! Perhaps you can use that as a carrot!"

Incorporated in 1982, the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre, is a program for people who need people. The aim of the CAB is to attend to issues concerning health, social services, protection, education and other quality-of-life issues for all but especially for the marginalised and youth.

At Friday evening's celebration, it was obvious that the community is in good hands with the amazing volunteers who help the staff, board and committees to offer the many programs, events and activities that it does.

For more information about the CAB Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre visit www.cabmn.org or call the CAB Main office at 450-292-3114 or the Youth Centre at 450-292-4886.

Christmas for you

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McLean said that the event has become a great experience over the last several years, drawing a larger and larger crowd from Lennoxville and the surrounding area. Despite the mission of service, the organizer said that one need not be alone or lonely to come and share in time together. He said that the whole event has been a grand collaboration of volunteers both from within the HCC community and without, and added that the spirit of that continues on Christmas Day as well, with many people coming just to ask

how they can help out.

The church has coordinated 135 dozen baked goods and 14 turkeys for the meal from a variety of community donors, and McLean said that he is looking forward with great anticipation to the opportunity to share that generosity.

"It's a neat event," Mclean said.

The HCC relocated to downtown Lennoxville from Huntingville in 2011 and has been working since that time, through events like the annual Christmas dinner and others, to become a central hub of the local community.

"The reason we moved in from Huntingville to this building wasn't because we wanted a big old building that we would have to renovate," McLean joked. "It was for location, so we could be close to, and serve, the community."

Referring to the work of the Cornerstone food bank and various community groups and initiatives, McLean described the work of the faith community as one focused on service in varied forms and active community engagement.

"We're all about Jesus. We're all about faith, but people are people, you

know?" The church elder said, pointing out that no church should see itself as existing in a vacuum that is just waiting to be filled with a religious message. Faith communities, he said, need to go where people are and care for them, being a part of the communities they exist within. "Our motto is hands and feet," McLean continued, "we want to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today."

Running on that basis, McLean said that the building that the HCC occupied is open to anyone who might need it.

"We're open to anyone," the organizer said. "The building's a great big solid building, and we're going to heat it anyway, so the more activity and stuff we have going on in there the better. It's not a holy place, it's just a building."

Though the extensive renovations to the facility the church calls Cornerstone are ongoing, McLean said they welcome any and all rental requests and have big dreams for a dynamic and well-equipped community centre and concert space as the work comes together. The focus of the work recently has been on replacing doors and windows on the main structure, an effort that will culminate with the installation of new glass doors on the front of the building between now and Christmas.

"We got a grant from the town on the exterior renovations, and are very appreciative of that," McLean said. "Once the front doors are done the big things will be the main floor and the doors and windows on the presbytery."

Though he said that there is still "massive amounts of work to do" the event organizer shared a vision of someday hosting family movie nights, Classes from Bishops and Champlain, and concerts in an acoustically perfect upstairs hall.

In the short-term, though, the HCC has the "Christmas for you" lunch to look forward to.

Those seeking transportation or more information about the meal itself should call the HCC at 819-822-2627 or Paul McLean at 819-820-5932.



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