Halloween fun at Potton’s senior apartments

The Scoop
MABLE HASTINGS

A n enthusiastic group of Potton’s seniors, youth and students Against Destructive Decisions and volunteers organized and ran the annual Youth Centre haunted house in Potton.

Last Saturday evening, youth members of the Missisquoi North Youth Centre, Former Youth Involvement, and Students Against Destructive Decisions and volunteers organized and ran the annual Youth Centre haunted house in Potton.

Preparation took weeks and the actual event was an all-day affair for Julia Eldridge, Jessie Lee Johnson and Rachelle Lachance, the primary leaders who worked on the planning, make-up and decorating with a wonderful group of some 20 volunteers who put the plan into action. Outside the building, youth centre staff set up a Halloween themed photo booth and photos were taken of all youth and families who stopped by.

There was also free hot chocolate and coffee served by one of the staff and this was a great way to warm up eager trick-or-treaters and their parents. Approximately 150 people passed through the haunted house, while some debated and then decided it was just too scary! Treats were available for those who didn’t want to go beyond the front door.

One parent commented that the stop at the Youth Centre gave families a gathering place where they could chat, warm up and regroup as they headed off to another of the festive haunts.

For the Youth Centre, the more children and families who came through and then offered words of appreciation and encouragement for the effort made was all the fuel they needed to start preparing for next year’s haunt.

There is a very positive feeling when entering the Potton apartments. With its big spacious dining area and reception room, it is the perfect location for good times, happy memories and the sharing of community fun.

Missisquoi North Youth Centre haunted house was a scream in Potton

By Mable Hastings
MANSONVILLE

Saturday in Mansonville featured a haunted house at the youth centre.

Missisquoi North Youth Centre haunted house was a scream in Potton

Friday evening was a scary affair at the Potton Apartments.

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I still went to the many hours of trouble to coordinate another costume for Angus this year, because he deserves that. He loves to dress up, and I knew that even if it was for a few moments only, it was deeply worth it. That’s another thing that people with special needs family members have to often justify – the bother. We can sense the subtle ways that they feel included, and the minute reactions that show their interest or involvement. We know the rewards of the bother.

With a carnival theme at Haunted Beechmore’s party this year, our family became the performers of the old-school Silver Circus. Our costumes were all black, white and silver with touches of purple. My youngest was our ringmaster, my step-daughter our performing horse, my step-son our tattooed strongman, and my guy was our Voodoo Vilaian. I was the circus clairoyant. Angus was our silver-maned lion.

As a rule, I had 90 per cent of my time at the party on the dance floor, but this year was different. This year, Angus wanted to stay. And so, I spent my time with him, gladly, enthusiastically and with so much pride. This was a Portal experience, as my beautiful boy enjoyed his time, with so many people, with loud music and strange costumes. He stayed as long as his siblings did – when 11 p.m. hit and I was rounding up the other three to head a few minutes away to Gramma’s, that is when Angus left too.

As I drove back to the party, after all four were in jammies, with makeup removed and teeth brushed, under Gramma’s tired, but watchful eye, I felt so grateful for this portal. It is the kind of energy that never goes away.

There are no small victories. For a special needs family, the good moments last, and the great moments last forever. I will look back on Halloween of 2015 at Beechmore Manor as one of the best nights of motherhood for me. Thank you to our wonderful hosts, Léo and Louis-Philippe, who don’t really know the magic they have brought to our community. It has meant the world to our family.

For all of you out there who are starving for those glimmers, hang on for the silver linings, because they power the world.

MABLE HASTINGS

The Round Barn offered a shadow puppet show; the Optimist Club had a decorated stop in the center of town and, perhaps because the event fell on a Saturday evening and people had more time to prepare, it seemed that everyone joined in the fun.

Another parent commented how proud she was of the people of Potton who had made such an effort for the children. “For a small town,” she said, “Mansonville really is amazing.”

Diane Marcoux, a municipal councilor, stopped from house to house and captured photos along the way. She, too, felt that people had outdone themselves.

For the Youth Centre, the more children and families who came through and then offered words of appreciation and encouragement for the effort made was all the fuel they needed to start preparing for next year’s haunt.

“This is how we give back,” explained Johnson. “For the three of us, it is our favorite holiday and if we can bring something back to the Youth Centre and its programs, like the rest of FYI and SADD, we are happy to do it.”