

Potton lit up the park despite weather woes



THE SCOOP
MABLE HASTINGS

Despite the dreary and wet weather conditions, as rain fell and the wind blew, the soggy scene did not prevent organizers and attendees from coming out on Saturday evening May 19 to honour and remember those who have survived, are fighting or who lost their battle to cancer. The Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN) Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) sponsored event found SADD members, organizers, volunteers, contributors and attendees out in Park Manson in the middle of Mansonville to “light up the park with memories in the dark” in an evening inspired by and benefiting the Canadian Cancer Society’s “Relay for Life.”

Organizers of the event decided that

bringing such a gathering to the area on a smaller scale would enable loved ones, friends and supporters to come out locally and remember together. More than 350 luminary bags were sold, donations contributed and a grand total of \$2020.00 raised that will be presented by event spokesperson, Barbara Oliver at the upcoming Relay for Life event in Magog in June. The Cancer Society will place a second bag at their event in June for every luminary sold in Potton at this event held on May 19.

“We want to thank you all for the various ways that everyone supported this event,” said Barbara Oliver as she held up the check indicating the over \$2000.00 raised. “There are too many names to mention but we want you to know that we appreciate the part you all played in making this event in support of the Canadian Cancer Society possible.”

For a first time effort, all involved were proud and despite the downpour, inspired by the generosity and love of those who supported the event in so many ways. To name a few, the donation of juices from Jacques Ducharme-Marche Richelieu, sand from the Giroux family, cookies (and more cookies) from some of the best bakers around and served by Debbie Harding and Eleanor Cote, deejay services provided free of

charge by Jeremy Eldridge (DJ Jerk) who set the ambiance with his selection of inspiring music, those who helped with the sales of the luminary bags, those who then helped Barbara to prepare the bags (Jessie Cote, Angelle Laplume and cancer survivor, Patricia Lachance who also joined Erin Oliver to fill the bags for the event and the SADD youth and volunteers who set the bags up, transformed the park with decorations, did the clean up as well as Shannon Derby for providing and setting up the tents to give shelter from the rain...The list likely goes on and there is always a chance of forgetting to name someone. To ALL, who contributed in big and small ways, the organizers thank you immensely for your support, time and contribution.

As darkness fell, the rain increased but this did not hinder the plan nor dampen the spirits. The group of some fifty people gathered did a group walk around the park led by cancer survivors, Martha Barnes and Patricia Lachance. With umbrellas shared, many clasped hands and as they walked, they remembered; those they love, those to whom they send strength and those who, by their own journey inspire hope in us all.

For the SADD youth and their friends who gathered, helping to place lumi-

nary bags, one could not help but feel a deep sense of pride as, when the rain and wind toppled a bag, a youth ran to revive it realizing the importance of the name on it and how much it meant to the person who put it there. The kids were fantastic!

The purpose of the event was to light up the park with memories and to honour those loved and this was achieved. In the end, the rain could not wash away the love, sadness, joy and the wind only blew the memories of those honoured closer.



PHOTOS: MABLE HASTINGS





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