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10th anniversary of Alzheimer?s walk raises $38,000



Jan. 28, 2020 By Chris Drost

The heavy snowfall did not dampen the spirits of the crowd that gathered for the annual Alzheimer's Walk for Memories in the Corner Café at the Manor in Bancroft on the morning of Jan. 25. At the end of the day, the Bancroft IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's had raised an unofficial total of $38,022.

?I am always humbled by what this community can do,? expressed Sarah Krieger, education and support coordinator for the Hastings Prince Edward Alzheimer's Society. While the Walk has gone through many changes over the past 10 years, in terms of look and location, going from a carnival type atmosphere to a more intimate gathering, and moving from the high school to the Manor, Krieger explained that it could not have continued to be a success without the dedicated volunteers. ?We have raised more than $180,000 in the past 10 years,? she proudly announced.

Krieger took the opportunity of the tenth anniversary to publicly recognize the efforts of one individual, Dana Yonemitsu, who through experiencing Alzheimer's first-hand with her mother, was the inspiration for bringing the Walk for Memories to Bancroft. ?These events usually only happen in larger centres but once Dana gets an idea in her head, she runs with it,? Krieger said. The Bancroft and District Real Estate Board was also very supportive, especially in the first few years. ?Success here in Bancroft with the Walk has led to other small communities having walks of their own, an example of Dana's vision,? said Krieger. Yonemtisu was presented with a painting by local artist Diana Gurley, entitled Basket of Peonies.

Krieger stressed the important role that volunteers have always played in making this event a success. She acknowledged:

? Steve Scally, ?a true community member who has been here since the beginning.?

? Diane Brundage and Liz Inglis, ?who have always been part of the Walk since the start.?

? Audrey Mackey who ?is always full of energy.?

? Nancy Richard who ?you can always rely on to help,?

? Maureen Hall one of the newer dedicated volunteers.

? Maureen Kelly who is ?our ideas person,?

? and Mary Lou Gerow, ?also an enthusiastic volunteer.?

At this point in the proceedings, Liz Inglis stepped forward to surprise Krieger with a gift to recognize her efforts over the past 10 years. ?Sarah is always the one person who keeps us going and is a friend and cheers us on,? said Inglis. Krieger was presented with a piece called, ?Forget-me-not,? painted by an artist from Tweed.

Following the presentations, Sergeant Phillipe Regamey of the Bancroft OPP detachment stepped forward to tell the audience about the Project Lifesaver Program. The Bancroft unit has two receiving units that can be placed on cars which can pick up signals from individuals who have wandered away from home and are wearing a special bracelet. There are currently nine individuals in the area wearing bracelets and Krieger added, ?We can always bring in more.?

The local recovery rate using the units is currently 100 per cent, according to Regamey. They also have an emergency response team

and canine unit that can help. The OPP officers receive training every year. He went on to share the story of how a recent training exercise at the North Hastings Community Centre resulted in them finding the ?lost? individual in the music room at the high school. Regamey also explained that the bracelets are not intended only for individuals with Alzheimer's. ?Some individuals who are autistic and have wandering behaviour could also be registered with the program,? he said.

Some of the funds raised each year through the Walk for Memories go towards the purchase of the bracelets. Bancroft and Area police Advisory Committee kindly purchased the receiving units for the area.

Not all OPP stations in Ontario have this program but partly because of the success in Bancroft, it is being incorporated into a new national strategy, Finding Your Way, that will bring Project Life Saver to all communities. ?North Hastings is a ?trail blazer,? said Regamey.

President of Choices Thrift Shop, Shelley Brown, flanked by a group representing the 34 volunteers who operate Choices, stepped forward to present Krieger with a cheque for $10,000. ?Choices has done so much for our community by keeping things out of the landfill and offering reasonably priced clothing to the area. They sell a lot of clothing and the community supports it. Thank you,? said Krieger. Choices operates completely on a volunteer basis with individuals working in short three-hour shifts. ?More volunteers are still needed,? explained Brown.

When all the presentations were done, many of those attending set off on a walk through the halls in the Manor while others mingled in the Corner Café and made purchases from the wide selection of donated bake goods.

The Alzheimer's Walk for Memories would not have been possible without the support of the following organizations:

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