

Community Care North Hastings shows appreciation for volunteers



By Tony Pearson

It was a seasonal "thank you" with bells on.

Last week, Community Care North Hastings celebrated the many volunteers who make possible its programs to help seniors by holding a holiday luncheon at the Bancroft Bible Chapel. And to end to the festivities, the newly-formed Bancroft Bell-Ringers gave their second-ever public performance.

The volunteer statistics are truly impressive. Roxina Keith, CCNH operations manager, outlined how people contributed literally thousands of free hours to programs which help seniors and others live independent lives in their own homes despite any physical or social restrictions:

- * Meals on Wheels volunteers delivered nearly 4,000 healthy meals
- * Volunteer drivers made over 7,000 trips taking those with mobility difficulties to medical appointments, pharmacies, and friends
- * Volunteer callers placed over 7,000 telephone calls to check up on the conditions of people with health concerns or isolation
- * Volunteers arranged nearly 1,000 medical foot care appointments
- * Volunteers spent over 600 hours recording reading materials for the visually impaired
- * Volunteers logged 150 hours helping low-income individuals prepare their tax returns
- * Volunteers served the monthly seniors luncheons in Coe Hill ? over 600 meals
- * Volunteers ran the Bancroft Walking Club and the Coe Hill exercise classes

Volunteers also operate the Heritage Thrift Shop, Heritage Home Furniture, and the Coe Hill Thrift Shop, whose proceeds help keep TROUT busses on the road. Even the CCNH office depends on volunteer staffers to manage its reception and handle its accounts.

And needless to say, the luncheon itself was prepared by volunteers.

Bancroft Bell-Ringers Make Their Debut

If Wendy Taxis has a bell, she'll ring it in the morning, and she'll ring it in the evening too, all over the town. That's because she, along with Shelly King, were wondering last spring what new activity might appeal (groan!) to area seniors. So they put together a successful New Horizons grant application last June which allowed them to purchase a set of English-style hand bells. A call for participants was put out, and the Bancroft bell-ringers were born.

Taxis is a former president of the Ontario Guild of English Hand-Bell Ringers, and a veteran of workshops and performances all over Ontario, as well as at international conventions. Prior to settling in the Bancroft area, she had run a similar group at a church in Cobourg. She and her students have been practicing for months, and finally declared themselves ready for prime time. After a test run at the annual general meeting of the Integration Association, they staged their first full public performance a couple of weeks ago at Riverstone Seniors Residence. Last week, they rang out at the volunteer luncheon for Community Care North Hastings.

Taxis stated that the group hopes to keep performing into the new year. "Bells are joyous instruments," she said, "and especially suited to joyous occasions - feasts like Christmas and Easter for sure, but also whenever people have something to celebrate."

Incidentally, the group's name is a provisional "place-holder" until they come across one they feel truly suits them. Taxis has suggested "Ladies with Brass Bells", but would welcome other suggestions.