

Baptist Church holds fundraiser for the unhoused



By Bill Kilpatrick

On May 9 Rod Moffitt held a piano concert at the Community Fellowship Baptist Church to raise money to help support the unhoused community in North Hastings. Those in attendance were treated to a variety of music from multiple genres from classical to gospel. It was described by Esther Clark, the emcee, as a mix of 'toe tapping to rag' that involved both intense and challenging passages to soft melodies. Moffitt's programme included pieces from Ludwig von Beethoven, Johann Sebastian Bach, Robert Schumann, William Bolcom, Scott Joplin, and Fred Bock.

According to the biography portion of the program, Moffitt was not only a church musician and an educator for most of his life, but he also managed to attain the Associate Diploma, or ARCT as it is often referred to, from the Royal Conservatory of Music. The Associate Diploma is the highest academic standing award that is awarded by the Conservatory of music. The cost of the concert was by donation only.

Moffitt explained that the purpose of the concert was three-fold, to raise money for the unhoused community, but also to provide enjoyment for those present, and to help encourage young piano players to reach their goals. Moffitt explained that 100 percent of the money raised would be going to help the unhoused community by providing dinners once a month, a program that the church only recently began running.

Back in March the church was approached by Frieda Woodcock, who helps prepare meals for the unhoused community, and she

asked if the church was willing to help out. 'We thought about it and said 'Why not.' We have a kitchen and we have people who are willing to share their gifts and talents. Let's go for it,' said Clark. One of Moffitt's motivations for the fundraiser comes from his connection to some of those in the unhoused community. 'The reason why I'm raising funds for the unhoused is because I know some of them personally. They were students in school when I was teaching,' he said.

Coordinating with Woodcock they decided that they would begin by doing dinners once a month on the last Friday. Clark explained that the church takes care of the main portion of the 25 meals, along with fruit and juice boxes, when required. They then deliver the meals to Woodcock who distributes them to members of the unhoused community. Clark mentioned that members of the Mennonite community have also partnered with them to make the meals.

Clark said that there is an increased coordination happening amongst faith groups in North Hastings pointing out the importance of teamwork when it comes to doing volunteer work due to the high burnout rate. 'When you're doing something like this you can burn yourself out or other volunteers who are helping you. So, it's good to ask for other people to get involved,' said Clark.

When asked what people can do to help the unhoused community Clark stated, 'Get involved. If people are interested in getting involved ask your local representatives such as local councillors, County representatives, MPs and MPPs, or leaders of your local faith community. Get involved with perhaps the homelessness coalition run by Russell Grant at St. John's Anglican Church... Call, reach out, ask, get involved.' The concert raised over \$500 dollars that will go to purchasing the ingredients for the meals along with a carry bag to ensure that the meals are transported safely. The Baptist Church plans to expand their meal program as more funds become available.

Donations to the Baptist Church meals for the unhoused program can be made through e-transfer at offering@cfbcbancroft.ca or by cash or cheque which can be dropped off directly at the church during business hours.