

Meals on Wheels vital at 50

Community Care Peterborough's Meals on Wheels food delivery program celebrated 50 years of service at the Royal Gardens Retirement Residence on Wednesday.

About 200 people attended the anniversary celebration, including supporters as well as past and current clients and volunteers who shared personal stories.

Over the past 50 years, Meals on Wheels has delivered hot meals throughout Peterborough, a service that is now available to Lakefield area residents too. Frozen meals are also available from all eight Community Care Peterborough city and county offices.

Community Care delivered 42,283 meals in the city and county last year.

Executive director Danielle Belair, who has been with Community Care since 2002, is extremely proud of the work accomplished by Meals on Wheels. "It started in 1964 by the Courtesy Association and it's grown from there," Belair said. "Now Community Care Peterborough has the program and we deliver over 42,000 meals to over 669 clients throughout the city and county of Peterborough."

The frozen meal program is provided through Apetito, a food supplier that operates in Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and The Netherlands.

The hot meals are prepared by the food services department at Trent University and are brought to the Community Care offices in Peterborough and Lakefield. Volunteers deliver the meals from there on arranged routes.

"It's such a vital program and it's only possible because of the volunteers," said Mary Reynolds, the fund development and communications co-ordinator at Community Care. "This is a great outreach for us to thank our volunteers for the work they've done and to encourage other people to come and get involved as well."

Every year the Peterborough District Masonic Association chooses a project for their district lodges to raise money for.

Andrew Henderson, the immediate past district deputy grand master for the Masons, chose to help Community Care this year and presented a cheque for \$9596.30 from the service club at the anniversary celebration. "There are a lot of fundraisers to help out with but most of the time you don't really see anything happening in the community afterwards," Henderson said. "With Community Care, we targeted Meals on Wheels, transportation and general funds because we knew it would come back to the local areas where our district lodges are."

Lodges within the Peterborough district, including Campbellford, Millbrook, Warkworth, Norwood, Keene and Havelock, were asked to participate in fundraising activities in support of Community Care and to choose where their donations would be targeted specifically. Funds raised by each lodge were directed to the Community Care office that serves in their community.

Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver hot meals to adults with physical challenges and seniors in Peterborough Monday to Friday of each week. On average about 800 frozen meals are delivered each month throughout Peterborough.

In Lakefield about 20 to 30 hot meals are delivered every Tuesday and Thursday to clients in Lakefield, Warsaw and Burleigh Falls.

Apart from delivering nutritious meals, volunteers also offer clients a warm smile and the reassurance of an at-home security check.

Article by Pema Tsering, Peterborough Examiner, published on October 9, 2014

Photo of Community Care's Executive Director Danielle Belair by Cliff Skarstedt Jr, Peterborough Examiner



Darci, Gail, Patty and Danielle share laughs and many stories with Bernie Clark (middle), former Meals on Wheels Coordinator for 25 years.

