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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SWEET SUCCESS: Tim Hortons' Holiday Smile Cookie Campaign in Orangeville raised \$31,590 from Nov. 17 to 23, which was split evenly between the Tim Hortons Foundation and Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Dufferin and District. A cheque for \$15,795 was presented on Dec. 3 to BBBS Dufferin Executive Director Nancy Stallmach (left) from Krista Goudereault, who owns three local Tim Hortons. The funds will help BBBS match more children facing adversity with a caring mentor. The Tim Hortons Foundation runs camps for underprivileged children to enjoy throughout the year. The split between BBBS Dufferin and the Tim Hortons Foundation is particularly complementary this year, as the local organization has helped Tim's select disadvantaged youth from Dufferin County to enjoy a camp experience since its inception. In the past, the Holiday Smile Cookie Campaign has supported other local charities, such as the Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre and Orangeville Food Bank.

Orangeville celebrates 33 years of Christmas in the Park

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The park of Kay Cee Gardens has come alive once again this December, as the Orangeville Optimist Club unveiled its annual Christmas display.

Titled Christmas in the Park, the event completely transforms the park's quiet, humble pathways into a vibrant, festive explosion of colours and Christmas spirit.

Dennis Cox, the Optimist's chairman of Christmas in the Park, said they are always improving and innovating the displays every year, from their small start through 2025.

"It's really grown from a very humble beginning to what we have now," he said. "We're always looking to add new things to our displays or refurbish older ones."

A new display this year includes a steampunk-themed tree.

"Months have been spent on making it, and it's an absolute work of art, it truly is," Cox said. "We didn't put it out early to keep it under wraps, just to protect it from vandalism and to keep the tree itself a big surprise, so people can see it unveiled on opening night."

The Optimist Club expects around 25,000 people will attend Christmas in the Park throughout December, which concludes at the end of the month.

The opening ceremony on Monday, Dec. 1, was a little bit different from previous years. While the gates opened to the pub-



LAUNCHING THE LIGHTS: Orangeville council members and Mayor Lisa Post joined the lighting ceremony at Kay Cee Gardens for Christmas in the Park on Dec. 1. Mayor Post described the event as a key cornerstone of the town's traditions. Santa Claus was in attendance, and the event featured incredible displays, spectacular lights, music and entertainment. The event is hosted by the Optimist Club of Orangeville, with support from Orangeville Hydro and the Orangeville Fire Department.

lic at 6:30 p.m., the opening ceremony was shortened, so the lighting event would happen right at 7 p.m. Cox said this was to lessen the time people were waiting in the cold.

"We'll have some words from the mayor and that's it," he said. "What we found was that people were waiting a little too long. We had this speaker and that speaker, and we felt like, 'let's get right to it' so we could turn on the lights at 7 p.m."

Mayor Lisa Post and council were present for the opening ceremony. Post praised the Optimist Club's dedication and passion for working so hard on the display again this year.

Continued on Page A3

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Orangeville council reviews 2026 budget during special meeting

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Orangeville’s new municipal capital and operating budget will be the final annual spending plan debated by the current slate of councillors before the next election.

And Mayor Lisa Post offered assurances that the budgetary debate will be open and free as in previous years, despite an upper hand afforded to Ontario mayors by the crowd at Queen’s Park.

“Every member of council continues to have a strong voice at this table,” Post said during a special Dec. 1 budget meeting.

Strong Mayor Power legislation was expanded to include Orangeville on May 1, with the stated intention of helping deliver on provincial priorities such as building more homes, transit, and other infrastructure. That’s when the province expanded the catchment area of the Strong Mayor Powers to include 169 additional municipalities beyond the initial number when introduced in 2022. At that time, only the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto were granted Strong Mayor Powers.

Many municipal governments have shirked the Strong Mayor Power, believing it alters local democratic governance by concentrat-

ing decision-making authority in a single individual. They have said it weakens the role of elected councils, going against collaboration and shared leadership.

Post previously said she would delegate whatever responsibility and authority she could.

Nick Garisto, a former town councillor and deputy mayor, said Orangeville residents were tapped for more than a seven per cent tax increase between the municipal and Dufferin County portions.

He said he hopes that council will work to minimize any kind of tax rate increase for 2026.

“I would hope that you work (for) zero per cent,” Garisto said. “Because I think the taxpayers of this town, they deserve it.”

He said he shells out more than \$7,000 in taxes each year.

“It’s pretty tough for a senior guy,” he said.

The proposed 2026 property tax levy requirement for town services, excluding policing, is about \$40.3 million, an increase of \$950,000 from 2025, resulting in an estimated tax increase of 1.99 per cent.

The property tax levy requirement for policing in 2026 is \$6 million, an increase of \$0.6 million, resulting in an estimated tax increase

of 1.36 per cent.

Combined, the estimated total tax impact is 3.35 per cent and, on an average residential property, would result in an annual tax increase of about \$120.

Education and Dufferin County’s portion of a taxpayer’s annual bill hasn’t been factored in yet.

David Smith, the town’s CAO, said the 2026 municipal operating and capital budget is focused on reliable services today and readiness for tomorrow.

“The town’s proposed budget reflects that balance,” he said.

Later, he added, “Together we will keep Orangeville affordable, in a state of good repair, and ready for what is next.”

Cheryl Braan, the town’s chief financial officer and treasurer, provided a “high-level overview” of next year’s possible spending plan with deeper details to be weighed later this month.

There are competing pressures to contend with when putting together a municipal budget, she said.

“If you want low taxes and you want more services, you’re going to have to put up with more density,” she said. “Or if you want more services and you want lower density, you’re

going to have to put up with higher taxes. Lastly, if you want low taxes and you want low density, you may have to entertain service cuts.”

The consumer price index (CPI), a metric for gauging inflation, is above two per cent as of October. Capital costs have escalated by about four per cent year over year.

The town’s aging assets are nearing the end of their lifespans, requiring significant investment, Braan said. Grant money from the provincial and federal governments has fallen short of inflation, and assessment growth for the 2026 tax year is low at 0.17 per cent, she said.

That growth is probably the lowest it has been in at least the last decade, Braan noted.

The significant policing costs billed by the OPP in 2025, along with any increases next year, will also weigh on the budget. Council decided to phase in last year’s bill over two years.

“The cost of OPP versus Orangeville Police Service is still much more beneficial to going with the OPP service,” Braan said. “I know we need to eventually move away from this comparison, but the history of policing costs since the transition of the OPP-delivered service suggests that the town is benefiting from transition.”

Lights shine bright at annual Christmas in the Park

Continued from Front

“We need to give a huge cheer to the Optimist Club for bringing this event to Orangeville every single year for 33 years,” she said. “This is such a cornerstone event for Orangeville. We thank the Optimist Club for everything that they do, and I want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas.”

Alongside the new displays that wowed

the crowd, Cox said that they also have some new faces joining them at the club. These new hands were out throughout the season, helping set up the displays. He continued by saying that the club appreciates any new members and volunteers who can assist with the initiative each year.

“We’re always, always looking for new members; it’s critical to keep this thing going,” he said. “You’ve got to have new blood

all the time. We’re encouraging anyone that’s interested in joining us to come down here and talk to any of our members. We’ll have Optimists out here every evening.”

After 33 years of the Optimist Club running Christmas in the Park, the displays continue to expand and innovate every year. With Santa wandering the grounds and hot chocolate on tap, the lighting ceremony was another resounding success.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

Town Page

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Time	Location	Meeting	To listen in
Monday, Dec. 8	7 p.m.	Council chambers and livestream	Special council meeting	orangeville.ca/WatchLive
Tuesday, Dec. 9	7 p.m.	Council chambers and by phone	Special council meeting	orangeville.ca/WatchLive
Wednesday, Dec. 10	7 p.m.	Council chambers and by phone	Special council meeting	orangeville.ca/WatchLive
Thursday, Dec. 11	10 a.m.	Council chambers and by phone	Access Orangeville	1-289-801-5774 ID: 863 907 997#

*Start time of council and committee meetings is subject to change

*For more information on how to participate and to view council and committee agendas, please visit orangeville.ca/meetings.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



Stories & songs with Santa


Stories with Santa

Friday, Dec. 5, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Alder Recreation Centre atrium
275 Alder Street

Orangeville Public Library

orangevillelibrary.ca



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Property taxes: important information

10-month pre-authorized payments

First withdrawal date January 9

If you're registered for the 10-month pre-authorized payment plan, you should have received a letter indicating the upcoming adjustment to your payments.

The letter indicated the first updated payment would be withdrawn on December 5, 2025. This was incorrect. The first withdrawal will occur on January 9, 2026.

We apologize for the inconvenience. An updated letter will be sent out for your records.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Public notice

Committee of Adjustment procedural bylaw

The Town of Orangeville council will be considering a proposed bylaw to establish procedures for the Town's Committee of Adjustment. The bylaw outlines how meetings will be called, conducted and kept open to the public in accordance with provincial legislation.

Meeting details

Date: December 8, 2025

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall, 87 Broadway

Watch online: livestream available at orangeville.ca/WatchLive

How to participate

Learn how to speak at a council meeting at orangeville.ca/SpeakUp.

For more information and to attend via Zoom, visit the meeting agenda at orangeville.ca/meetings. The agenda will be posted by December 4, 2025.

Submit written comments

Send your comments before the meeting to councilagenda@orangeville.ca. Any feedback may become part of the public record.

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Do you have thoughts on our roads, trails, sidewalks and transit and how they all work together?

As we move forward to the next stage of in developing our Transportation Master Plan. This will create a vision for how our transportation methods keep our community connected.

Watch our presentation at the December 8 council meeting. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.

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Mulmur women defends world title in women’s physique bodybuilding championship

Written By JAMES GERUS

Jessie Steinberg recently made her community of Mulmur proud after taking first place in the world championship for women’s physique at a bodybuilding competition in Toronto.

Steinberg, 53, moved to Dufferin County in 2000. Prior to competing in bodybuilding competitions, she played semi-pro soccer, but two concussions in that sport led her to seek a different physical outlet.

It was when she was 45, taking her daughter to a gymnastics class, that another mom in the bodybuilding world suggested she give it a try. She took a chance on the sport in February of that year, and by October, she competed in her first competition.

While she was hesitant about undertaking such a daunting new skill, Steinberg explains, “I felt like a fish out of water. But you know what? I’m learning something new, I’m 45, and I’m learning something too. It’s good for my brain, and humble for my ego. Let’s go!”

Steinberg is someone who oozes optimism and curiosity from every ounce of her being. On top of her commitment to athletics, she works a myriad of jobs that connect her to the community. She’s well known as the founder of Leap Adventures - an educational team building organization that works with corporations and schools and gets them out of their comfort zones with team building activities.

Steinberg is a teacher for the Upper Grand District School Board, a part-time musician, works in disaster relief, and is working on a tree farm this holiday season.

Where does this entrepreneur of many trades get all this energy and motivation from? From two areas: One is looking after

and respecting her body. “I love when people sink into their bodies and know how strong they are,” said Steinberg, who doesn’t drink or smoke. “However you built your body, you built it — the way you feed it, move it, don’t move it — and if you don’t like how it feels lets get empowered to have it feel better!” The other key factor is having a purpose and mission to help her community.

“Giving back to the community, creating community, its part of who I am and how I roll in the world. I want to walk around with generosity, kindness, and integrity,” said Steinberg.

That love of the body and zest for life keep her going and help her maintain a positive mindset as she won her latest competition.

On Nov. 8 she defended her title in the Ultimate Fitness Events (UFE) World Championships for all-natural bodybuilding in Toronto.

Steinberg competed in the women’s physique category and gained five extra pounds of muscle just for the show. After winning last year, she was able to win again and is hoping to have a three-peat next year.

But regardless of the outcome, Steinberg said, “In the end, this is about me showing up on stage with what I got, and in my world, I already won because I made it to the stage. Everything else is a bonus.”

The regimen to prepare for the competition is intense; when hinting at her diet and physical training to prepare for the show, Steinberg reflects, “It’s possible for women over 40 to build muscle. We just have to shift what we’ve always done. We have to eat differently and move differently. Instead of doing cardio, we actually have to



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
WORLD CHAMPION: Jessie Steinerh of Mulmur has been named the world champion in the women’s physique category of the Ultimate Fitness Events (UFE) World Championships, held in Toronto on Nov. 8

lift weights.” As a bodybuilder, Steinberg is committed to living a natural lifestyle and competing in competitions as a natural bodybuilder, despite the challenge of gaining muscle at an older age. “If people choose not to go natural, they need to know what they’re getting into,” she said, noting the side effects are what really concern her. “The implications are huge. There’s something to be said about being a natural bodybuilder and seeing how you can build muscle with what you got.” Fortunately, Steinberg has many support-

ive people on her side. Even Popeye’s Supplements in Orangeville supports her as an athlete and helps provide her with supplements and powders to aid her journey. When asked if she has a favourite part of the body to work out, she said, while it’s definitely not leg day, “I love doing upper body, typically chest and shoulders are my (favourite).” When asked if she has advice for others looking to take up bodybuilding at any age, she said to “connect with somebody, connect with a coach. Someone who has been in it. And connect with someone who is also a natural.”

Pre-packaged donation bags available at local grocery stores in support of the Orangeville Food Bank

Written By JAMES GERUS

Several Orangeville grocery stores are continuing their pre-packaged donation bag program in town with the Orangeville Food Bank, providing an assorted bag of non-perishable food items for those in need; a great gift for families in the community seeking food this holiday season.

The Orangeville food bank has seen an increase in the number of people in the community looking for food over the past few years.

One of the programs they have strategized is having a variety of prepackaged bags containing non-perishable food items near the checkout counters of various grocery stores. They are easy to spot: brown paper bags filled with non-perishable items, including soup,

rice, dry pasta, and oatmeal. Snacks and dessert items such as cookies and crackers may also be included in the bags.

Carrie-Anne DeCaprio, the Orangeville Food Bank’s director of donor engagement and outreach, explains that while this program was founded before she arrived, it is nevertheless an incredibly helpful way to bring in more food for the community.

Explaining how it works, DeCaprio said, “We at the Orangeville Food Bank, at the beginning of every month, send out our most needed list to the grocery stores, and whenever possible, they try and make sure those items are put into the donation bags.”

Three major Orangeville-based grocery stores currently participating in the program include Sobeys, FreshCo., and Metro. The

bags are priced differently so customers can choose a price that fits their budget, with some at \$10 and others at \$15. Moreover, some bags include items for different needs, such as bags of food specifically suited for infants or bags with only household items. After purchase, the bags are placed in a donation bin, usually near the front of the store, and volunteers pick them up every week. On a more creative note, some customers may occasionally find some of the bags drawn in crayon. One of the managers at Sobeys reaches out to local elementary schools and gets the young students to decorate the bags in a way only kids can. The students will create a variety of illustrations on the bags and write a positive message or two.

The purchase of the bags is especially needed as the number of people visiting the Orangeville Food Bank is increasing. Just last month, they saw 1,566 people come through their front door seeking assistance. In addition to the pre-packaged donation bags in grocery stores, they have launched their Festive Giving Campaign with the Orangeville Citizen, offering Festive Giving Cards, purchased as donations to the food bank, which are then gifted for Christmas. On how the specific food in the bags is especially needed around the holidays, DeCaprio adds the convenience of the pre-selected bags, “makes giving the donations easy. It’s items we need that are pre-packaged so you can feel good about purchasing them at the local grocery stores.”

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For full schedule visit:
www.orangevilleoptimists.ca/christmas-in-the-park

ORANGEVILLE WINTER FARMERS MARKET
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Inside Town Hall - 87 Broadway

This ad space is provided by Tim Hortons Orangeville and is intended for use by non-profit organizations. For information on how to include your community event in this calendar, please call 519-941-2230

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Friday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
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Pick up dates/times will be assigned at registration.

Orangeville Christmas Nite Lights Patrol working on final list

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

An annual competition to crown the community's best decorated houses, hosted by the Orangeville Christmas Nite Lights Patrol (OCNLP), is back.

Now in its sixth year, the contest is run by the same organizers as the Orangeville Halloween Haunt Patrol, and has grown in popularity each year, with its Facebook Page now at over 2,000 followers.

A list of the best-decorated homes in Orangeville is shared on the OCNLP Facebook Page leading up to Christmas, and it will be finalized on Dec. 10.

As of Dec. 3, the list includes 339 Lisa Marie Dr., 5 Aiken Cres. (2024 People's Choice Winner), 183 Elaine Dr., 100 Meadow Dr., 26 Pheasant Cres., 19 Banting Dr., 30 Westdale Ave., 203 Elizabeth St., 12 Faulkner St., 67 Parkview Dr., 2 Brighton Pl., 8 Chapman Rd., 90 Althorpe Dr., 51 Sherwood St., 21 Glengarry St., and 18 Rose St.

As well, Andrew Ave., Adams Ct. and Parklane have been named "Sweet Streets," and OCNLP organizer Michelle Hartley said these neighbourhoods are not to be missed.

When the final list is released, it will be divided into two areas: north of Broadway and south of Broadway. One winner from each area will be announced across six categories – Best Roof Display, Best Single Tree Display, Best Multiple Tree Display, Best Street, Best Sparkle/Brightness, and People's Choice.

The People's Choice Winner will be determined through an online vote on Dec. 23 and 24, while the rest of the winners will be cho-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

LIGHTING THE NIGHT: Local homeowners are rolling up their sleeves and getting to work on creating the most iconic and creative holiday displays in town as the annual Orangeville Christmas Nite Lights Patrol contest gets underway.

sen by a panel of community judges.

The same house cannot win two years in a row in the same category, except for the People's Choice Award.

On Saturday, Dec. 20, at 4 p.m., the OCNLP will feature Christmas carolling, beginning at the Lord Dufferin Centre Gazebo, travelling up First Street to Broadway, and ending at the Christmas tree in front of Orangeville Town Hall.

The carollers will be accepting quarters, which will be donated to the Mill Street Branch of the Orangeville Public Library. The quarters will be available at the Orangeville Food Bank vending machine inside the library, where anyone can access food at 25 cents per item.

To learn more about the annual contest, visit the "Orangeville Christmas Nite Lights Patrol" Facebook page.



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Melancthon mayor shocked by OPP raid at local scrapyard

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Changes are being proposed following the discovery that a local scrapyard was in possession of illegal items and in violation of various community bylaws.

On Wednesday, Nov. 19, the Ontario Provincial Police executed a search warrant at Northern Iron and Metal in Melancthon. What they found was a plethora of illegal items.

Melancthon Mayor Darren White said the town has had prior issues with the scrapyard, but this is the first time that arrests have ever been made.

“We have been having ongoing issues around compliance and property standards with this salvage yard,” White said. “Most of it has to do with the amount of material stored, the heights they are being stored at, and the cleanliness of the premises. There’s been a number of ongoing problems. But to my knowledge, this is the first time that the police have made arrests and laid charges for criminal behaviour on the site.”

The bylaw violations turned out to be the least of the scrapyard’s problems, as the OPP recovered stolen vehicles, trailers, power tools and raw materials, including stolen bell copper wire.

Even more seriously, among the seized items were 11 long guns, six pistols, three replica firearms with removed serial numbers, prohibited magazines and large amounts of ammunition. The OPP also seized methamphetamine and cocaine.

Six people, five residing in Melancthon and one in Dundalk, now face a variety of charges related to the seizure of these items.

Mayor White said he was stunned by what the warrant found.

“Absolutely, we were shocked, we’re always surprised by any type of criminal activity in any of the businesses that operate in the township,” he said. “We expect that businesses within the township will operate within the rules of the law, and we’re grateful for the OPP’s response.”

“It’s extremely concerning that these types of things were found in that scrapyard. The neighbours certainly aren’t happy about it. I’m not happy about it, neither is the council. We expect better for our residents and we expect better from businesses that operate here,” Mayor White added.

He said he was less surprised by the copper found on the premises. He acknowledged that copper theft is an increasingly problematic issue and hopes more focus will be placed on breaking up theft operations in the future. With copper prices getting higher, criminal elements, he said, are



FILE PHOTO

SHOCKING DISCOVERY: Melancthon Mayor Darren White recently spoke out after Northern Iron and Metal, a scrapyard in Melancthon, had a search warrant executed on it, resulting in several charges.

taking advantage. This copper is often re-sold, sometimes to scrapyards like the one raided in Melancthon.

As a result of these issues, Northern Iron and Metal has had its license to operate revoked, the mayor said, effective immediately.

He followed up by saying the town will be looking into changing and strengthening their bylaws to more strictly monitor and uphold standards in salvage and scrap yards going forward.

“While we haven’t directly communicated with the OPP, as their side of the situation is remaining internal, we might be making some changes to our bylaws going forward,” Mayor White said. “We may look into adding some restrictive clauses to specific items that are known to be stolen at higher rates, such as copper, brass, those kinds of things.”

“I’m also going to ask the council to include a registry for scrapyards, something to keep track of people who are selling large quantities of things that might be products of crime, so again, copper, brass, pipes, catalytic converters. We’re going to demand that they start keeping a record, including the ID of sellers. If we have to take those steps to make it easier for the police to find and arrest thieves, then we’ll do that absolutely.”

The executed warrant has sent a shock through the township and is likely to trigger a series of reforms to help prevent an event like this from happening again, keeping the community safe.

Julia’s Place Music Therapy Centre to host interactive music concert this weekend

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A heart-warming performance with a focus on audience participation will be held at a local church this weekend.

Julia’s Place is hosting an interactive concert on Saturday, Dec. 6, starting at 10 a.m. inside the Tweedsmuir Memorial Presbyterian Church at 6 John St., Orangeville.

This concert is the finale of a three-month effort by Julia’s Place to put together an intergenerational performing choir.

Julia Beth Kowaleski, owner of Julia’s Place, explained that the program is designed to reduce the risks of degenerative brain diseases in older adults through music and social interaction.

“The Singing for Health Initiative is an inclusive intergenerational choir program that is open to anyone who loves to sing,” she said. “It is sponsored by the Alzheimer’s Society of Dufferin and is designed to be a safe and friendly environment, inclusive for people of all abilities.”

“Research shows that older adults who experience social isolation or loneliness have an increased risk of dementia (50 per cent), stroke (32 per cent), and premature death (45 per cent),” Kowaleski added.

She told the Citizen that the interactive concert at the end of the program allows for more of the community to be involved and takes away any performance pressure on the choir participants, which is only a bonus boost to accessibility.

Additionally, she said that it is just more fun to sing together in a big group, and the audience is highly encouraged to participate.

“Attendees can expect to have a great time during the concert, and are encouraged to sing along during the entire concert and extra loud during their favourite tunes,” she said. “The lyrics of the songs will be projected for audience members to read, and they’ll have the option of playing some percussion instruments along with the choir.”

“The repertoire, which was entirely cho-

sen by the program participants, involves a wide variety of genres and styles and will include a couple of Christmas tunes to get people into the holiday spirit,” Kowaleski added.

She hopes the concert will shine a light on the importance of music and its viability as a therapeutic tool.

“We are hoping that this event will help increase awareness of how purposeful music therapy programs can have a significant impact on individuals and the entire community,” Kowaleski said. “Music is accessible to everyone, and it should be considered essential, not optional, when considering the health and well-being of individuals in our communities and the community itself as a whole.”

The concert is one part of the musical programming offered by Julia’s Place to achieve this goal. The therapy centre specializes in neuro-rehabilitation and mental health services and has been operating since 2017.

Their stated mission is to help individuals learn new skills, maintain the skills they already have to stay as healthy and active as possible, and restore skills they once had but lost due to degenerative diseases, injury, accident, or non-use.

In the future, Kowaleski hopes the program will continue and even expand in 2026, but due to a lack of current funding, it will end for the time being after this concert.

“We would like to continue this program but we need additional funding so there is no current plan to continue in 2026,” she said. “This program uses music and rhythm exercises to help maintain walking, balance, and general movement. Maintaining physical skills is essential for independence as it helps prevent accidents and falls which lead to injuries.”

“Any organization interested in helping to sponsor these types of programs in the community is encouraged to contact us.”

For more information about Julia’s Place and the Singing for Health Initiative, contact julia@juliaplacemusictherapy.com.



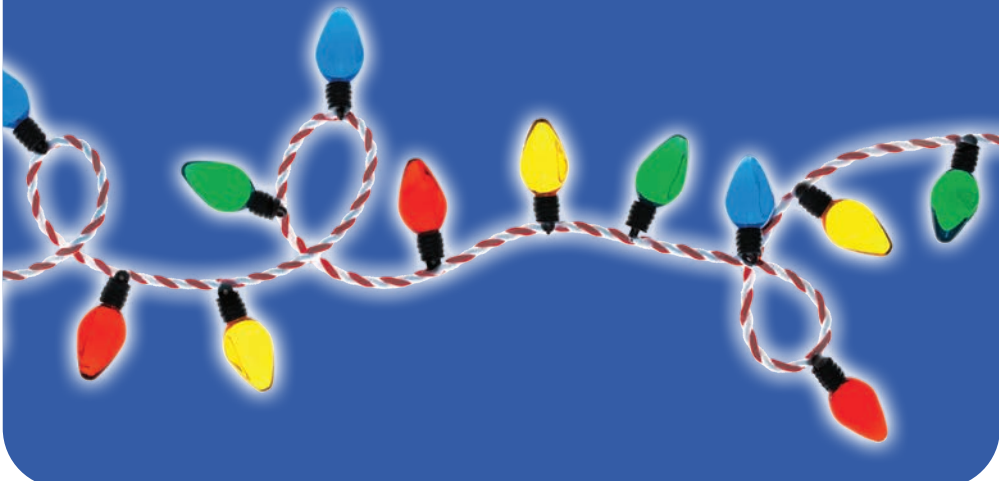
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Early-bird registration opens for Women’s Day Celebration Breakfast

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Family Transition Place is calling on residents and partners to join them on March 5, 2026, for their Women’s Day Celebration Breakfast at the Hockley Valley Resort.

“We’re thrilled to gather with our community for this special celebration,” said FTP Executive Director Lynette Pole-Langdon. “International Women’s Day is a time to honour women’s achievements, uplift one another, and continue advocating for equity and safety.”

Guests can expect to be served a gourmet buffet breakfast and a cocktail to start off the morning. But there’s more to be featured as well.

There will be a silent auction on site, offering guests the chance to spend money on FTP and potentially win unique items to take home. There will also be some prizes handed out, and much more.

All the proceeds raised from the day will be going straight back to FTP and used to support their essential services and programs that strive to build safer, healthier communities for

women and their families.

Family Transition Place is a local organization that focuses on providing support services to women and children, helping them to escape from violent or unhealthy relationships. They don’t stop their mission there, however, and continue to offer support as their clients begin to rebuild their lives.

FTP strive to provide a warm and welcoming space, where personal safety and well-being are the core focus. The organisation provides shelter services for those who need a place to stay, and has professional staff, in-

cluding trained counsellors.

To maintain their high standards and services, FTP relies on community donations, which are part of this breakfast event.

Early-bird tickets are currently available online for \$75 each and will be available until Jan. 26.

To learn more about the Women’s Day Celebration Breakfast, visit familytransitionplace.ca/events/international-womens-day/

For any further information about the breakfast, send an email to Kelly at kelly@familytransitionplace.ca.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SUCCESSFUL DONATION DRIVE: Orangeville Fire held Stuff a Truck on Nov. 22 at the Orangeville Canadian Tire, where they collected non-perishable food, hygiene products, household essentials, clothing, gift cards, and monetary donations. In the end, Orangeville Fire raised \$725 in cash and more than \$2,000 worth of toys. These donations will be given to local families in need of extra support over the holidays.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COZY CHRISTMAS: IODE Headwaters, a local not-for-profit that supports various charities in the community each year, held a Pajama Drive and collected over 80 warm and fuzzy jammies for the Senior’s Santa Stocking Program. The Dufferin County-based program makes Christmas more special for seniors in long-term care, retirement homes, and the community by providing them with a stocking filled with gifts. In addition to the pajamas, IODE Headwaters also donated extra goodies. Divinity and Co. Hair Studio was the drop-off spot for the Pajama Drive. IODE Headwaters members hold up the donations



SEASON OF LIGHT: The Achill Choral Society’s winter concert, *Season of Light*, came to Westminster United Church in Orangeville on Nov. 30. Under the direction of Artistic Director Shawn Grenke, the performers sang classic Christmas carols as well as music about the Solstice and winter season. The Season of Light concert was also held on Nov. 29 at the Knox Presbyterian Church in Alliston.



PHOTOS BY J.A.W. PHOTOGRAPHY

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Credit Valley Conservation’s offer to purchase “Swan Lake” denied

Written By **RILEY MURPHY**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) made an offer to purchase 593 Charleston Sideroad, otherwise known as 0 Shaws Creek Road and “Swan Lake” from Brookvalley Project Management Inc., owned by Nick Cortellucci.

That offer, which was made in October, was not successful.

The property has been the subject of numerous gatherings and petitions, with residents advocating for months.

The issue of “Swan Lake” began in May of 2025 with a motion tabled at a Planning and Development Committee Meeting.

The motion would authorize a grading agreement allowing fill to be brought into the property of 0 Shaw’s Creek Road, “Swan Lake,” owned by Brookvalley Project Management Inc.

In the motion, it was shared that the owner of the property had approached the Town about “rehabilitating an old aggregate pit located on the property with fill created from their development sites across Caledon and the Greater Toronto Area.”

The property was zoned Extractive Industrial, which was not compatible with the current Fill by-law at the time.

There is currently a proposed Site Alteration By-law being developed that will repeal and replace the Town’s Current Fill By-law once passed.

The comment period for the proposed Site Alteration By-law is now closed, and Staff are reading through comments.

The community has been advocating for “Swan Lake” for months and its “rehabilitated ecosystem,” drawing emphasis to those who live in the area surrounding the prop-

erty, as well as the numerous animals who have now made the property their home.

These species include Trumpeter Swans, which have given the property its name, known by many as “Swan Lake.”

In a statement to the Citizen, CVC shared that “that the offer presented was not successful and appreciates Brookvalley’s willingness to entertain an offer for acquisition.”

“While the offer itself is confidential, the offer value was based on a property appraisal conducted by a third-party accredited appraiser and in accordance with CVC and Region of Peel Greenlands Securement Program (GSP) Terms, on current permitted uses for the property and in keeping with values for other recent sales of similar lands in the area,” stated Sophia Maio, Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications with CVC.

“CVC remains committed to land acquisition in the Credit River Watershed to strategically secure new lands to expand the amount of protected greenspace,” says Maio.

“CVC’s ability to respond quickly to this opportunity was only made possible by the ongoing support of Peel’s Greenlands Securement Program (GSP) and Credit Valley Conservation Foundation (CVCF). Both partners play a critical role in allowing CVC to remain agile and responsive when acquisition opportunities arise.”

“Swan Lake,” will now return to Council.

When the motion was initially approved, it was stated that Staff were directed to prepare a report to Council or the Planning and Development Committee with respect to the matter before entering into an agreement.

Brookvalley Project Management Inc. was contacted for a statement, but had not responded to the Citizen’s request by press time this week.

Dufferin County mourns the loss of lifelong advocate for mothers and babies, Robin Berger

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A Grand Valley woman who dedicated her life to serving mothers, babies, and the broader community recently passed away.

Robin Berger, who was born on Jan. 24, 1944, died on Oct. 22. She leaves behind a legacy of compassion, serving as a nurse and advocate for mothers and newborns across the Wellington–Dufferin–Guelph area – and beyond.

Her daughter, Leah Berger, said some of the lessons she taught were to serve others with heart and competence, treat every person as someone who matters, invest in family and relationships, show up to listen and love, savour simple joys, and remember that the ripple effect of one life can be immense.

“To my Mom: thank you. Thank you for your care, your strength, your love, your laughter, your example. Your work in nursing healed and comforted so many. Your home and heart nurtured us. Your spirit — playful, generous, curious — inspired us. You are my true hero, and you were my best friend,” Leah Berger wrote to the Citizen.

Berger’s obituary highlights her service to the community through her role as a public health nurse with Wellington–Dufferin–Guelph Public Health (WDGPH).

“Robin Berger’s name has been synonymous with breastfeeding support across Wellington–Dufferin–Guelph for more than three decades,” reads Berger’s obituary. “A registered nurse who embraced lactation as both science and vocation, Robin became an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) in 1994 — the first person to hold that role within the local public-health unit — and from that moment she transformed care for new families in our region.”

Berger’s career began in public health nursing, helping mothers navigate the early postpartum period, as hospital stays shortened and parents needed access to more

community-based support.

“Over the years she counselled thousands of families, taught breastfeeding classes, and mentored health-care colleagues who continue to rely on her guidance,” the obituary stated. “Her work came full circle: many of the infants she supported returned years later as parents seeking her help for their own children.”

Berger retired from WDGPB in 2011, but began serving the community in a different way – through her own private practice.

She opened “Robin’s Nest,” offering one-on-one lactation consultations and group support through her breastfeeding and parenting support services. After running her private practice for 12 years, she retired at age 79 in 2023

Recognizing her lifetime of service, Berger was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal on May 9 and in October 2023, Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post presented her with a Certificate of Recognition for her decades of service as an international board-certified lactation consultant.

“Outside her professional life, Robin was a devoted family person. She leaves behind, Lou her husband of 60 years and their children, Heidi, Leah and Jon and her three grandchildren, Mia, Lauren and Luke as well as countless families who count her among the people who made parenthood easier and more joyful,” reads the obituary.

A celebration of life was held for Berger on Nov. 18 at the In Memoriam Funeral Services in Grand Valley.

“Robin’s influence will continue in the policies, resources, and trained clinicians she helped shape. For many mothers, a quiet conversation with Robin in those vulnerable early days changed the course of their breastfeeding journey,” reads the obituary.

“For a community, her steady presence strengthened the bonds between families, health professionals and the public-health system she loved.”

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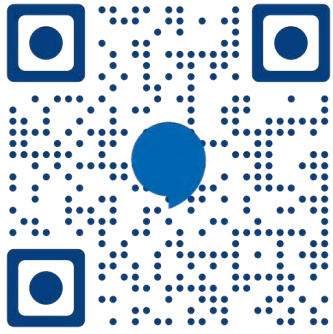
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Arts & Entertainment



LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Rapunzel: A Braid New World features hilariously dramatic retelling of beloved fairy tale

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Theatre Orangeville’s latest pantomime production is funny, visually appealing and absolutely worth seeing for some much-needed laughs during the holiday season.

When one thinks of Rapunzel, plenty of things might come to mind - but Footloose probably isn’t one of them. Yet you may be surprised more than once by Theatre Orangeville’s dynamic retelling of the classic tale, which premiered last Friday.

Created by David Nairn, the theatre’s artistic director emeritus, who returned to the director’s chair, and Debbie Collins, Rapunzel: A Braid New World is the theatre’s newest seasonal pantomime – and the company has once again delivered a stellar performance.

The story, without giving too much away, begins with an extremely poorly executed vegetable theft – one committed against the most wicked lady in the region, Vexangria. In his desperation to avoid a swiftly approaching reckoning, the thief strikes a bargain for his safe return, sacrificing his still-unborn child, who will grow into the Rapunzel we all know.

If this feels like an extreme escalation over stolen produce, you’d be right - but this is pantomime, and it’s only the beginning of this wacky tale.

Audiences are introduced to a colourful range of quirky characters - fairies, witches, monsters, and magic mirrors - and each performance lands perfectly. The cast, returning from last year’s pantomime, showcases expert comedic timing and musical talent, consistently earning laughs and applause.

The actors play off one another with such fluidity that it’s easy to forget you’re watching a production at all, rather than a genuine conversation between a baker and a witch. A hallmark of good pantomime is adaptability, and this cast excels at engaging the audience, reacting to their energy, and never letting a moment fall flat.

The blocking is equally well handled. No character ever feels underused or lost, even in full-cast scenes. Everyone remains visible, acknowledged, and ready with a joke or one-liner. Even when simply moving a prop, each performer stays in character, adding charm and humour through expressions and asides.

The jokes themselves are up-to-the-minute, with plenty of humour at Dundalk’s expense. Running gags – from easy-bake ovens to Vexangria’s increasingly elaborate walking aids and Gen Z slang that leaves you unsure whether to laugh or cringe – this production keeps the audience cracking up every other minute.

The musical numbers match the show’s quirky energy. Audiences are encouraged to sing along if they can keep up. Fans of classic hits are treated to Footloose, while lovers of musical theatre will enjoy a nod to The Pirates of Penzance.

Live music adds even more charm. The decision to feature an on-stage performer providing well-timed sound effects and piano accompaniment adds an extra layer of warmth to the production that would have lacked without it.

Of course, no Theatre Orangeville show is complete without standout design work, and this production is no exception. The set is expertly crafted and makes excellent use of the stage space. Rapunzel’s tower - or half-tower - rotates to reveal multiple settings and can be moved forward for a key solo or pushed back as Rapunzel searches for her long-lost friend (who may or may not be directly beneath it during a musical



SHARYN AYLIFFE PHOTOS


A HAIR-RAISING HIT: Theatre Orangeville’s Rapunzel: A Braid New World is the latest seasonal Pantomime and an absolute joy to experience. From Dundalk disses to a Footloose rendition, Rapunzel has something for everyone to enjoy.

number).


Nothing is underused or left unoptimized. Nairn and the Theatre Orangeville team have once again raised the bar, delivering a production the town can take pride - and plenty of laughs - in.

Rapunzel: A Braid New World is a wacky, funny, unforgettable show that theatre-goers won’t want to miss. Catch it now through Dec. 21.






MacMaster
BUICK GMC




Krystal Norris
Director of Financial Services

Krystal leads the financial services department at MacMaster with experience, professionalism, and a strong commitment to customer care. She works closely with each guest to find the right financing or protection plan, ensuring a smooth and stress-free process. Her leadership plays a key role in delivering a top-tier buying experience.




Orangeville Chrysler
Jeep RAM




Chantal Soper
Administrative Assistant

Chantal helps keep daily operations running smoothly at Orangeville Chrysler. From assisting the team to managing documents and supporting customer needs behind the scenes, she brings organization, reliability, and a positive attitude to everything she does. Her role is key to keeping things efficient and on track.




Orangeville Volkswagen



Bonnie Rayburn
Receptionist

Bonnie is often the first friendly face you'll see at Orangeville Volkswagen. With a warm smile and a helpful attitude, she makes sure every guest feels welcome and looked after. Whether directing calls or greeting visitors, Bonnie helps create a positive and professional first impression every time.



3 Dealerships, 1 Community

The Citizen CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 25C210 • Solution on page: CLASSIFIEDS SECTION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
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	69							70				

CLUES ACROSS

1. Spiritual leaders
7. A type of solution
13. Fortified wine
14. Edible mollusk
16. They precede C
17. A way to compare
19. Government lawyer
20. "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
22. The eighth month (abbr.)
23. Very willing
25. ___ ex Machina
26. Makes happy
28. Type of berry
29. A doctrine
30. Popular Dodge truck model
31. Dekagram
33. Naturally occurring solid
34. Company officer
36. Villains
38. Cricket frogs
40. Influential German

psychologist
41. Endured
43. A female domestic
44. You can get stuck in one
45. Cigarette (slang)
47. Fiber optics network
48. Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
51. Employee stock ownership plan
53. Belonging to the bottom layer
55. Sound
56. MLB legend Hank
58. Very attractive person
59. Late beloved sportscaster Craig
60. South Dakota
61. Mocking
64. Symbol for gold
65. Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
67. Humor
69. Shawl
70. Preliminary patient

assessment
CLUES DOWN
1. Animal disease
2. Commercial
3. Necklace material
4. Containers
5. A way to save for your future
6. Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
7. Dipped down
8. Head injury (abbr.)
9. Lay about
10. Intestinal
11. Opposite of yes
12. Caused to be loved
13. Spiritual leader of Islam
15. Businesslike
18. Not in
21. Number above the line in a fraction
24. An animal with its own day
26. Pouch
27. Swedish krona

30. Start over
32. Field flowers
35. Fourteen
37. A visual way to interact with a computer
38. Up-to-date
39. Campaigns
42. Touch lightly
43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
46. Violent seizure of property
47. Supporter of the Pope
49. Anxiety
50. Body fluid
52. One who's faking it
54. Title of respect
55. Chilean city
57. City in central Japan
59. Silk garment
62. A form of dance
63. Automobile
66. The man
68. Justice Dept. head honcho

No one has more self-confidence than the person who does a crossword puzzle with a pen.



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kids' corner

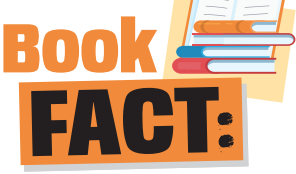
How they say that in...

English: Cover (book)
Spanish: Forro
Italian: Copertina
French: Couverture
German: Umschlag

Creative Colouring

Colour in this picture to create your own masterpiece.






Book FACT:

This term refers to reading texts quickly but not completely.

Answer: Skim

CANADA MONTH



HISTORY

1851

The first Canadian postage stamps are printed.

Neurodivergent cast of actors to perform sold out show at Westminster Church

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Imagine Expressive Arts Collective, created by Branching Out Support Services, will perform *Mystory of Light*, a theatrical production featuring a cast of neurodiverse adults.

The show is coming to Westminster United Church in Orangeville on Dec. 12 and sold out tickets just two weeks after it was announced, showcasing strong community support.

Jane Cameron and Michelle Grierson will be leading the cast in this sensory theatre performance. The founder of Branching Out Support Services, Kimberly Van Ryn, told the Citizen that Cameron, who's directing the show, has been a part of it every step of the way.

"Jane Cameron is a creative genius. Her process is incredible. She sat with the group in a circle for quite a bit of time to hear their stories – however they tell them – listen to their passions, understand their lives and then created a show that highlights each actor as well as combines all their talents in group numbers," said Van Ryn.

"The show is a masterpiece that deeply honors each neurodiverse actor. So, although Jane wrote the script, it was informed by each actor and their support circles. It is a close reflection of what the actors wanted to see in their play, how they see and experience their own lives and what they have to share with others."

Mystory of Light focuses on how to find light in darkness and how people can show

each other "the light."

Founded as an 11-week pilot project in October, the Imagine Expressive Arts Collective aims to address the need for more inclusive opportunities for neurodivergent artists.

"We were aware that there are already some amazing dramatic arts, music and dance opportunities for people with disabilities (or) neurodivergence in Dufferin County," said Van Ryn. "We wanted to add to that roster with a low pressure, community supportive collective where all people are welcome despite being able to communicate through speech or if they communicate differently."

She added, "It was created by a caregiver of a neurodivergent artist having a conversation with some of the support professionals at Branching Out Support Services. We then sat down with director Jane Cameron and talked with people who had lived experience of both disability and art as to what they would like to see in our community."

The collective's end goal is to turn it into a standalone not-for-profit organization once the 11-week pilot concludes.

Reflecting on what makes this performance special, Van Ryn said it's community theatre at its "absolute best."

"All of the actors are neurodivergent (or) disabled, and their support professionals and volunteers merge into the set to support them every step of the way. This performance comes from the passions of people who are highly creative and experience the world from a very sensory-based perspective. Our theatre performance blends so



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PREPARING FOR THE DEBUT: The Imagine Expressive Arts Collective, created by Branching Out Support Services as an 11-week pilot project, will take the stage at Westminster United Church to perform *Mystory of Light*, directed by Jane Cameron.

many elements of art, courage, support and community," Van Ryn told the Citizen.

The actors have been practicing for two to three hours each week leading up to the show, and Van Ryn said their skills are "second to none."

"Every Friday they come together as a group in the space where we will do our performance, the lower level of the Westminster Church. With their supporters they design sets, learn dances, practice music, prac-

tice timing, and work with the staff team as we solve problems on the fly, and make it happen," she explained.

In addition to the theatrical debut on Dec. 12, there will be a small artisan market featuring neurodivergent artists, showing and selling their work.

Products from Branching Out Support Services' Granola Project will also be for sale, and there will be a community social after the show.

Hockley Historic Community Hall and Church to hold third annual Christmas Concert

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

For those who are looking for a local festive way to celebrate Christmas and the holiday season, Hockley has you covered with its annual Christmas concert on Dec. 14 at 7 p.m.

For the last two years, the Hockley Historic Community Hall and Church has been hosting an annual Christmas concert, organized in part by local author and musician Angela van Breemen. She said that guests can expect a wonderful assortment of music and talent to really ignite the holiday spirit.

"We have a very nice mix of music which I think will appeal to everyone, and really tug on your heartstrings," she said. "We've got a soprano, a mezzo soprano, two baritones, and a tenor, and we'll be performing music for all ages, going from big style opera pieces to contemporary pieces that we all know and love."

This concert is going to be bigger this year

than the previous two years, said van Breemen. She felt that previous concerts were a little bit too short, and the audience was asking for more. This year, she said, there will be more performers than ever before, extending the concert to roughly 1 hour and 45 minutes.

"I absolutely love finding new talent in our area, it's just so full of it," van Breeman enthused. "Opening, we're going to have Ben Canedo, he's a wonder baritone, and some of the music he's going to be singing is 'Believe,' a song from The Polar Express, and 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.' We're also going to be having a pair of teen musicians, Brianna and Quinn. They're a soft rock acoustic duo – absolutely wonderful voices. They'll be playing some Neil Young, 'Rocking Around the Christmas Tree', and more."

Brianna and Quinn will also be performing with another musician, Sean Derraugh. They'll be performing a unique rendition of Feliz Navidad.

Rounding out the rest of the night, Lorne Derraugh, Cynthia Fox-Fucile, and Paul Poirier will be joining the evening's performers, bringing more songs and sounds to the hall. Of course, van Breemen herself will be taking the stage.

The concert will also support the preservation of the historic community hall and church, a personal goal for van Breemen, who's lived in the area for a long time.

"I actually work with Procyon Wildlife, and two years ago I held a fundraising concert for Procyon at the hall and church, and I realized that 'oh my god,' these folks really need more awareness about these buildings," she said. "So I decided to switch up and do the charity concerts for the hall and church, which we've been doing the last two years, and now this is our third. I'm absolutely delighted to do it."

The community hall and church have a very unique history. In 1887, the church was disassembled and carried by sleds through

the winter landscape from Mono to its current location in Hockley.

As much as van Breemen wants to support the hall and church, she also said that bringing people together in the small village for the holidays is also an important goal. A sense of community, belonging, and bonding is the centerpiece of the concert.

"I think that there's something special about bringing people together for Christmas," van Breeman said. "Our concerts always consist of singing with the audience; somehow, people aren't as shy around Christmas, and they sing along. This is a time to come together, enjoy some music, and celebrate community."

Tickets for this event are \$10, with kids under 10 getting free admission. Tickets are selling fast, however, so van Breemen recommends securing them fast.

To inquire about tickets, email info@hockleyvillage.com or call 905-691-2361.

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Grand Valley

Melancthon Feral Cat Rescue to host annual Sponsor a Cat fundraiser

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Feral Cat Rescue in Melancthon is going the extra mile this holiday to make sure lost cats get the care they deserve.

During the holiday season, when the cold starts to set in, it's more important than ever to ensure stray and feral cats are taken off the streets and given a home or place to stay that's dry and warm.

Feral Cat Rescue is running a cat sponsorship program for the Christmas season, dubbed Sponsor a Cat for Christmas.

Sharon Morden, volunteer shelter manager, said it's a wholesome and thoughtful way for the public and animal lovers to help care for the 129 cats currently staying at the shelter. Due to the feral cat focus of the shelter, many cats need extra care to stay healthy and happy.

"The Sponsor a Cat fundraiser is welcomed yearly by the community. It was started 4 years ago and is a chance for the community to help a cat that is in foster or at

the rescue," she said. "We have had a lot of cats needing extensive dental treatment due to injuries and bad health on intake."

The program follows a simple plan. It's a donation of \$10 to be put towards sponsoring a cat. Once two donations of \$10 are put towards a cat, they are considered sponsored. Of course, a sponsor can also donate the full \$20 if they would like to contribute that much. A wholesome reward awaits those who help.

"Once you make a donation, your name will be placed on an ornament," Morden said. "When the cat has two sponsors, the ornament will go onto our tree. The tree is going to be located at the Rescue or the Thrift shop."

Morden said that the shelter needs all the help it can get. As a non-profit, they rely on community support to continue operating and even run a thrift store to generate extra revenue. The Thrift Shop is located on First Avenue East in front of the Giant Tiger plaza, beside Lubinator.

Between that, the shelter, and all the cats,

the volunteers still work full-time jobs away from the rescue.

The rescue has been in operation for over 10 years, after Morden recognized a huge need in the community. The shelter strives to create a space catered to feral cats who need some extra comfort to adjust to indoor life.

"We were founded in 2011 because there is a huge need to help the feral, outdoor cats as they do not do well in shelters in caged environments due to fear and not being socialized with people," she said. "The rescue offers a free-roaming environment where cats can come around in their own time, whether it be two days, two weeks, or two years. They have 24-hour access to an outdoor enclosure that is 20 feet x 50 feet and has a partially roofed area with walls and an open air area where they can enjoy direct sunshine and weather from each season."

The shelter fights hard to help feral cats get adjusted, with volunteers on site regularly to help socialize and care for the cats.

They are incredibly grateful for the com-

munity's support and are asking anyone who can donate to help to please do so. There are multiple ways to help, and it's greatly appreciated no matter which way a donor chooses.

Morden asks that anyone who is looking to donate provide it via e-transfer at info@feralcatrescue.ca.

"We are so thankful for our caring community and the support and help with the cats that need our help," she said.

"You are also welcome to support by shopping at the Feral Cat Rescue thrift as 100 per cent of the proceeds go to our medical account. We sell new and gently used items and 100 per cent of the proceeds go to the medical care of the cats. We are so thankful to the community for donations of items to sell at the thrift store and are blessed to have such wonderful community support," Morden added.

For more information about Feral Cat Rescue and its Sponsor a Cat for Christmas initiative, use the email above or call (519) 278-0707.

Artist Kareen Hague shares process behind sewing unique paintings with a focus on nature

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

Kareen Hague is an impressionist artist who uses layering of colours until an image evolves.

In an interview with the Citizen earlier this week, Hague discussed her travels and intriguing ideas about her art.

For some years, Hague worked as the design director for a Canadian sweater manufacturer, Parkhurst Knitwear, a job that often sent her travelling, including 10 trips to China. Her artwork for her at the time was a so-called "side hustle." When her job ended in December 2024, her art changed from a side hustle to full-time.

She has designed a textured process which is unique to her, and she attended a residency to develop this technique in France, with plans for another in Portugal. Her residency in France was in May this year, at Hotel Valière for two weeks. There, her knowledge of her techniques improved, and her plans to start creating wall hangings began in earnest.

"An interesting thing, I wanted to sew my fabric to the canvas, but there was no sewing machine at the hotel," said Hauge.

She called for one, and at last a lady came back and said, "I have a sewing machine!"

Built in the 1950s, the machine had a hand crank and "didn't work until it did."

"There was something magical about sewing this canvas with a 1950s sewing machine in a house that was built in the 1200s,"

Hague reminisced.

"This led to (me) taking my practice forward and (learning) how to do a large wall hanging with my next residency to Portugal," she was excited to say. "I can't even say how transformable the time in France was."

She talked about her life, noting that art is a business too, and said she does a lot of outdoor shows. But also: during one in Fenelon Falls, Ont., she was talking to a person who had an old sewing machine that was her grandmother's and was willing to give it to her.

It meant moving out some old things of Hague's own. Whereas classic artists tend to keep everything because they could be useful, Hague opted to move out a trio of antique items, which were gratefully received elsewhere, and the sewing machine moved in. Tokens of thanks were given as well to the former owner.

It was an old Singer, built in 1906.

Hague was clear about how her mother was an influence, saying, "My mother was an artist. I have followed in her footsteps. She was very active in the 80s, taking part in many shows. She did watercolour for the most part."

Reporting that her own art is selling, she described how, along with three artist friends, Cindy Lam, Lori Fonger, and Leah Olsen-Kent, in October, they staged a show titled Deconstructed Nature at the Headwaters Arts Gallery at the Alton Mill Arts Centre.

Anyone who comes to the Alton Mill is genuinely interested in art, Hague observed. People loved what they were doing. It worked well together for them.

In the long term, Hague is ambitious: "I want to sell in Europe. I just love being there, the food, the culture, the history."

She was accepted last fall to an arts event at the huge shopping mall under the Louvre in Paris (Carrousel du Louvre) – but it was too expensive to participate, so they deferred her application to this spring.

From her upcoming trip to Portugal to the Aviario Studio residency in April 2026, Hague has seen that wall hangings and a lot of texture are making a comeback in art.

"I want to create (a) body of work that appeals to all tastes, using raw canvas stitched in for landscape, and what is really compelling is field flowers. I sold one recently, a 30 by 30 at a show, of wild flowers, very random," Hauge said.

That day, her husband, Jim, had just returned from the UK from a trip to London with friends and, as a side note, revealed his great-great-great-grandfather is Robert Baldwin, the 19th-century Canadian politician and lawyer, one of the "Fathers of Confederation." in 1848.

Also working as a teacher, Hague gives a demo for artists on Liquitex, with 160 people attending on Zoom last time, and she conducts it out of her studio. She teaches art in Markham and taught a course at OCAD.

"You can sell courses off your website,"



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
SEWING SUCCESS: Artist Kareen Hague sits with her 1906 28K Singer sewing machine.

she offered. "This is a good time to be an artist now but you have to work hard; got to work like crazy but when you're doing what you love – that's okay."

She said she is "pretty sure both my mother and my dad would have been proud to see what I have done. My dad was a teacher/superintendent but also a fantastic woodworker, carver and sculptor – also creative."

To view Kareen Hague's work and for more about her, go to kareenhague.com.

ORANGEVILLE CHRYSLER

JADE TRAVERSO

SALES ASSOCIATE

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS AT ORANGEVILLE CHRYSLER

Hello,

I'm very happy to share that I'm back at Orangeville Chrysler after my second maternity leave and am once again available for bookings and appointments. I've truly missed connecting with you and am excited to get back to doing what I love.

This year also marks a special milestone for me — 10 years with Orangeville Chrysler — and I'm so grateful to have spent this time supporting our amazing customers.

If you need anything at all, or would like to schedule a visit — even just to stop by for a coffee — please feel free to reach out anytime. I'd love to hear from you.

Thank you so much for your patience and continued support. I'm really looking forward to seeing you soon.

Warmest regards, Jade

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ORANGEVILLE CHRYSLER

RYAN SKILLEN

SALES ASSOCIATE

Orangeville Chrysler is pleased to welcome Ryan Skillen as the newest member of its sales team. Born and raised in Orangeville, Ryan brings a strong understanding of the local community and its automotive needs. His long-standing passion for the automotive industry—particularly the Stellantis brand—drives his commitment to offering customers knowledgeable guidance and exceptional service.

Beyond his professional background, Ryan leads an active and well-balanced lifestyle. An avid golfer, he can often be found on the course perfecting his game.

With his local roots, industry expertise, and dedication to customer care, Ryan is excited to begin serving clients at Orangeville Chrysler and looks forward to helping drivers find the right vehicle with confidence and ease."

PROVIDING THE BEST SERVICE & VEHICLES TO OUR CUSTOMERS

Dufferin County launches BetterHomes Program to help residents save energy and money

Dufferin County is launching a new \$11.25 million program in early 2026 to help homeowners make their homes more energy efficient, comfortable, and affordable.

This program is funded in part by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Natural Resources Canada. Through its Green Municipal Fund's Community Efficiency Financing (CEF) initiative, FCM provided BetterHomes Dufferin with \$5 million in loans and a \$2.5 million grant to support an innovative home energy retrofit project in the county.

The CEF initiative helps municipalities deliver energy financing programs for low-rise residential properties. By addressing the financial barriers to energy efficiency upgrades, CEF empowers municipalities and homeowners to take meaningful action on climate change while improving housing affordability and community resilience.

BetterHomes Dufferin will offer low-interest loans of up to \$40,000 for energy-efficient home upgrades, including insulation, new windows, heat pumps, and more. Low-income households will be eligible for zero-interest loans of up to the same amount. Homeowners who heat with fuel oil or propane are especially encouraged to apply, as they are expected to see the highest energy and cost savings.

"BetterHomes Dufferin will allow our residents to take practical, affordable steps to make their homes more comfortable and energy-efficient for the long term," said Dufferin County Warden Janet Horner.

"This program reflects Council's commitment to helping people save money on energy costs, reduce emissions, and replace aging heat sources with new energy-efficient technologies."

"Energy efficiency retrofits are critical to keeping Canadian's bills low while reaching our climate goals. We are proud to support BetterHomes Dufferin taking action to build a clean, affordable future—one home at a time," noted Canada's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Tim Hodgson.

A key feature of the program is access to a free Energy Coach, available to all participants. The Energy Coach will guide homeowners through every step of the process — from the initial energy audit to identifying the most cost-effective upgrades, reviewing contractor quotes, applying for additional rebates, and completing their retrofit projects with confidence.

"What sets BetterHomes Dufferin apart from other programs is that it's designed to address the biggest barrier to home energy upgrades – upfront costs," said Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy for Dufferin County. "The program will cover initial project expenses, so people don't have to pay out of pocket before the savings begin."

"GMF's Community Efficiency Financing initiative proves that energy-efficient housing is within reach for all Canadians. By removing barriers to affordable, energy-efficient home upgrades, it equips municipalities to innovate, homeowners to save,



and communities to thrive. Retrofit projects such as BetterHomes Dufferin reduce energy bills providing financial relief and stability while reducing energy poverty for our people," noted Federation of Canadian Municipalities President Rebecca Bligh.

BetterHomes Dufferin supports key municipal priorities committed to in the County's climate action plans by helping residents lower energy costs, preparing homes for extreme weather, and stimulating local green-job growth. Eligible projects may also include upgrades for safety, accessibility, and to electrical systems.

The loan is tied to the property, not the individual homeowner, and is repaid through property taxes. "BetterHomes gives Dufferin homeowners a safe and reliable way to make upgrades that they might otherwise put off," said Warden Horner. "Because the loan is tied to the property and paid back slowly through their property taxes, it is an easy, low-risk option where homeowners can see savings immediately while improving their home."

Applications will be accepted from early 2026 and will continue while funds are available.

Dufferin OPP teams up with Ministry of Transportation for commercial vehicle enforcement, lays nine charges

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers once again partnered with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Enforcement Branch to conduct joint enforcement initiatives aimed at keeping local roads safe.

Last week, Dufferin OPP and MTO officers conducted a commercial motor vehicle enforcement blitz around Primrose focusing on compliance and road safety.

As a result, 19 commercial motor vehicles were inspected, nine charges were laid, one

plate removed, and six vehicles were taken out of service.

"These joint efforts play a vital role in ensuring the safety of all road users in Dufferin County," reads a press release from Dufferin OPP. "The Dufferin OPP is extremely proud of this ongoing partnership and remains committed to working together to promote road safety."

"Members of the Dufferin OPP are committed to public safety, delivering proactive

and innovative policing in partnership with our communities. Officers value your contribution to building safe communities," the release continued.

If you suspect someone is driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, call 9-1-1. If you have information about suspected unlawful activity, please contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers to remain anonymous at 1-800-221-2-8477 (TIPS) or visit www.crimestoppersdm.com.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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Orangeville student shares highlights after finishing Page Program at Queen’s Park

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

An Orangeville student who was selected to participate in the Queen’s Park Page Program has completed her term and is leaving with a new perspective on how the provincial government is run.

Elizabeth Demczur, a Grade 8 student at The Maples Academy, just outside of Orangeville in Amaranth, was selected to participate in the Legislative Page Program at Queen’s Park for the fall 2025 session.

After living in the heart of Toronto, close to Queen’s Park, during her time in the program, Demczur is back home in Orangeville, and said that working with Ontario’s lawmakers was an experience she’ll never forget.

“It was really cool to work closely with the MPPs and see what they do, especially for me, during the question periods in the morning,” she said. “I’m definitely feeling pretty good about it. I was very tired the first week I got back from it, though.”

For the last several weeks, Demczur got a front row seat to the inner workings of the provincial legislature.

Her duties, while not widely seen by those unfamiliar with parliament, were important. Bringing water to MPPs during debates, passing notes between colleagues, and bringing votes to the speaker were among the more mundane jobs.

But there were special assignments, too. One of which was Demczur’s favourite job: working with the Hansard Index.

“That job was definitely my favourite job,” she said. “The Hansard is the log of all the talking that goes on within the house. Every day, it gets logged and filed, so we would take all the notes up to the Hansard officer on the fifth floor to be filed, and then we take them back down to the MPPs. It

“Apply, even if you’re not sure that you want to apply ... It’s a great experience, and it’s a lot of fun. I learned a lot about government and how it works, because we would have a legislative class when we weren’t in the chambers to learn about the different branches of government and how it all worked, even (at) the federal level. So I would say to definitely try to get in if you’re thinking about it.”

Elizabeth Demczur

was probably my favourite role, partly because it got me out of the house, because it could get a bit boring after a while.”

“It was really cool that we were allowed to go up there, because normally, only staff for the office could go there,” Demczur added.

Alongside her duties working with the MPPs in parliament, Demczur had the chance to observe how the MPPs acted in the house, both during and after debates.

She said that their attitudes to each other could change dramatically.

“It was a very interesting thing that I saw during the debates,” she said. “Especially during the morning question periods. I could see how mad they would get at each other. But once it was finished, they’d suddenly get all friendly with each other again.”

Demczur said that after working with and observing parliament’s routines, she’s come out of the experience stronger, having developed her skills with the help and encouragement of staff and lawmakers. Overcoming her own nervousness was the first step.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY: Elizabeth Demczur stands before the doors of the Ontario Legislative Building in the page uniform she wore for the duration of her time in the program. She got the unique chance to see Ontario’s democracy up close and work closely with members of provincial parliament in Queen’s Park.

“I think my personal skills are definitely better now,” she said. “At first, I was really nervous going into it, especially on the first day, but the MPPs, ushers and security were really friendly. If you didn’t know where to go, or if you didn’t know someone, they would help you out.”

Looking back on her time at Queen’s Park, Demczur said that she’d love to do it all again if she had the chance, and is considering the Legislative Student Usher Program when she reaches university.

For now, though, she has some advice for any students thinking about the page program.

“Apply, even if you’re not sure that you

want to apply,” she said. “It’s a great experience, and it’s a lot of fun. I learned a lot about government and how it works, because we would have a legislative class when we weren’t in the chambers to learn about the different branches of government and how it all worked, even (at) the federal level. So I would say to definitely try to get in if you’re thinking about it.”

With one chapter now firmly behind her, Demczur has emerged changed and more knowledgeable, and a firm supporter of the page program, which continues to offer both hands-on character building and first-hand education on the inner workings of Ontario’s democratic system.

Dufferin OPP lay several charges in relation to impaired driving incidents in Orangeville last week

Dundalk man charged with impaired driving after fleeing

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers recently charged a Dundalk resident with impaired operation-related offences following a single motor vehicle collision.

Officers responded to a single-vehicle collision in the area of Orange Street and Chisholm Street in Orangeville on Nov. 26, at approximately 11:33 p.m. The vehicle had lost control, struck a tree, and became lodged on a stump. The driver and passenger fled the scene on foot, running toward a nearby housing complex.

Officers arrived promptly, secured the scene, and began an investigation. After speaking with witnesses, officers began an impaired driving investigation.

Joshua Reid, 20, from Dundalk, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Failure or refusal to comply with demand
- Fail to remain

The accused individual is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville. Their driver’s licence was suspended 90 days, and their vehicle impounded for 7 days.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

Traffic complaint results in impaired driving charges

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged an Orangeville resident with impaired operation-related offences following a traffic complaint.

Dufferin OPP officers responded to a report of a concerning driver in the area of Pheasant Drive in Orangeville on Nov. 28, at approximately 2:15 p.m.

Officers quickly located the vehicle, conducted a traffic stop, and initiated an im-

paired driving investigation.

Laurel Myers, 35, from Orangeville has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Having care or control of a motor vehicle with unsealed container of liquor

The accused individual is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville. Their driver’s licence was suspended 90 days, and their vehicle impounded for 7 days.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

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\$162

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Orangeville Junior C Northmen celebrate successful lacrosse season

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Orangeville Junior C Northmen celebrated another successful season in the Ontario Junior C Lacrosse League (OJCLL) with a banquet to end the year and honour players and coaches for their achievements this season.

Since entering the OJCLL, the Northmen have consistently delivered a solid performance.

During their inaugural season in the League in 2020, they won the Meredith Cup – an almost unheard of achievement in any league.

The Northmen won their first game of the season back on April 27, during their opener against the Six Nations Stealth.

During the 2025 season, the Junior C Northmen finished in second place in the West Division standings before heading into the playoffs.

In the playoffs, the Northmen won the opening round over Six Nations.

They bowed out of the season after taking a loss to the Burlington Warriors in the second round.

The year-end banquet was a chance to celebrate their success and honour players who delivered exceptional performances throughout the season.

Logan Marshall was awarded Most Valuable Offensive Player.

Devan Doig was honoured with the Ron McGuire Award for Northmen of the Year. Christian Kasiulewicz was awarded the Top Goalie, West Division League Award and the Steve Payne Ward for Unsung Hero.

Wes Mills was named Rookie of the Year.

TJ Wilson-Daponte was honoured with the Top Graduating Player Award.



CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS: The Orangeville Junior C Northmen honoured their own during a season-end banquet held at the Alton Legion on Saturday, Nov. 22. The Northmen celebrated another successful season in the Ontario Junior C Lacrosse League. Logan Marshall was awarded Most Valuable Offensive Player. Devan Doig was honoured with the Ron McGuire Award for Northmen of the Year. Christian Kasiulewicz was awarded the Top Goalie West Division League Award and the Steve Payne Award for Unsung Hero. Wes Mills was named Rookie of the Year. TJ Wilson-Daponte was honoured with the Top Graduating Player Award. Corbin Clements was honoured with the Most Valuable Defensive Player Award. Logan Brake was named Player of the Year. Cam McClintock was honoured as Most Valuable Defensive Player, West Division (League Award) and Transition Player of the Year.



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Corbin Clements was honoured with the Most Valuable Defensive Player award.

Cam McClintock was honoured as Most Valuable Defensive Player, West Division League Award and Transition Player of the Year.

GRADUATING PLAYERS: The Orangeville Junior C Northmen celebrated a successful season with a year-end banquet at the Legion in Alton on Saturday, Nov. 22. Two graduating players who have now completed their Junior careers were honoured by the team. Northmen head coach Branden Hunt presents Tucker Cunningham (left) and TJ Wilson-Daponte with their framed jerseys to recognize their contributions to the team.

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OPINION

Don't sweat the small stuff

Years ago, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormons, ran a series of public service-type commercials on network television.

They weren't proselytizing or even introducing their religion; they were just promoting good messages.

One of those commercials really stuck with me over the years.

There was a man standing in front of a mirror wearing an undershirt, his face covered in shaving cream.

He had a couple strokes of the razor before he heard a familiar sound and looked out the window.

The garbage truck passed by his house without stopping.

The man's son had forgotten to do one of his chores and didn't put the garbage out for pick-up.

In the next scene, the man, his face still covered in lather, and the son are seen running down the street with several garbage bags in an attempt to catch the garbage truck.

When the garbage truck makes its next stop, the two throw their garbage bags into the truck and give a wave to the drivers.

They return to the house and stop on the porch.

The father looks at the son.

In many cases, you would expect to hear the father admonish the son for his irresponsible behaviour and forgetting to do a simple but necessary chore.

Instead, the father laughs at the thought of the ridiculous sight of them running after the garbage truck.

He put his arm around the son's shoulder, and they entered the house.

The message: Don't sweat the small stuff.

I've always thought that was a short, yet powerful vignette of the right way to go through life.

Why make a big deal out of nothing?

Just over a month ago, we celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday. The idea behind this special time of year is to give thanks for what you have.

Originally, it meant giving thanks for a good harvest that would sustain your family over the next year.

Since most of us aren't really involved in a harvest anymore, it has become a time to reflect on all the good things you have in your life.

You can be thankful you're alive, have a decent job, your family is happy and healthy, and maybe because you have a Ford Mus-

tang convertible parked in your garage as a summer toy car.

You should be thankful you live in a country where you have a democratic voice and the power to change a government if you don't like its policies. You should be thankful you live in a country that is financially successful.

Over the past decade, there has been a lot of 'woke' information about all the wrongs this country has done in the past.

The truth is, this country was built where nothing existed before.

That bridge you drive over every day, and the streets and roads you take to get to work, were built. So were the hydroelectric dams that supply your electricity, the water purification plants that provide you with water, the arena where you play hockey, the home and subdivision you live in, and the park in your neighbourhood. They were all built by hard-working people over the course of over 300 years.

We should all appreciate these first-world amenities, and those who come here and try to disrupt that should probably just leave.

We are now heading into the Christmas season – the season of love, peace, and goodwill toward men – although it has mainly become the season of crass commercialism.

The day after Christmas Day was traditionally called Boxing Day for some reason.

It has now become synonymous with shopping and getting a good deal. I guess it works, or they wouldn't do it.

I recently bought a new smart TV. My old one just fizzled out and died one evening. Since TV repair went the way of the dinosaurs, buying a new one is really the only option.

When I went into the big box store we all shop at, but no one ever admits to buying at, I noticed all the TVs on display were huge.

After looking around, I came upon a skid full of 55-inch TVs. It was a good brand with lots of features and priced well below what I expected to pay.

I asked the salesperson a lot of questions about the product, and finally asked 'Why is it priced so low?'

She replied that it was part of the 'Black Friday' sale, and it was on for half price. Black Friday? That isn't even a Canadian thing, and it was only Thursday.

I now have a very large TV in a very small room, but I'm happy with it.

Enjoy the coming season, have fun, and don't sweat the small stuff – life is too short.



BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW

Strategy to stay out of jail

Israel's prime minister, Binyamin 'Bibi' Netanyahu, has just asked the country's president, Isaac Herzog, to "fully pardon" him of all three charges – bribery, fraud and breach of trust – that he has been on trial for since 2020. And the question is: why did he only ask for it now?

The alleged crimes were the kind of petty malpractice that often trips up politicians: accepting gifts (mostly cigars and champagne) from powerful businessmen and bribing media for positive coverage. However, a former Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, served 18 months in jail after conviction on similar charges, so Netanyahu does have a potential problem.

He has dealt with the charges for the past five years by delaying tactics in court and latterly by requesting endless postponements on the grounds that he was too busy fighting a war in the Gaza Strip. But there is currently a cease-fire in Gaza, which some people hope can be turned into a peace deal and reconstruction of the devastated homes of its 2.3 million people.

The cease-fire intensifies Bibi's legal problem, however, since he can no longer plausibly demand postponements in the trial proceedings because there is a war

on. Moreover, there must be an election for the next Knesset (parliament) by next October, and according to current opinion polls Netanyahu's coalition is unlikely to win.

But why are Israeli voters so ungrateful? Didn't Bibi win the war, crush the Palestinians and get all the hostages back? Well, yes, but he was also the man in charge on 7 October the year before last when Hamas fighters took Israel by surprise and murdered more than 1,200 Israelis in their own homes. A great many people have not forgiven him for that.

In Israel major government failures like this usually end up before an independent state commission of inquiry led by a retired judge. That would be political death for Netanyahu: his mistaken belief that he had tamed Hamas by letting large sums of money reach it from Arab sources was why Israel was so unprepared for the October attack.

Bibi has neutered that threat for the time being by putting himself in charge of the inquiry, but he could not hope to keep that position if there is a different government in Israel after the elections. Indeed, his whole agenda for creating a Palestinian-free Gaza, building on Donald Trump's

project for a 'Middle Eastern Riviera', would go out the window if he loses power.

Netanyahu seemed very close to his goal in September, but Trump himself then forced Bibi to accept the cease-fire, implicitly abandoning his 'Riviera' project in the process. (Why did Trump do that? Maybe he was swayed by pity for the Palestinians, or perhaps he just realised that the Saudi Arabians were getting very unhappy about it.)

At any rate, the best solution for all Netanyahu's problems, legal, strategic and political, would be a resumption of the war in Gaza.

He could go back to stalling court hearings on his corruption charges, he could get started on pushing Palestinians out of Gaza, perhaps he could even win the elections next year if the expulsions went well enough.

The only big obstacle to all that is Donald Trump, who now sees the cease-fire in Gaza as one of his major achievements. It's going nowhere politically, and even in terms of stopping the killing it's not very effective: in November Israeli forces killed at least 300 Palestinians in Gaza, most of them civilians. But Trump is quite protective about it, so Bibi must wait.

He can't do that indefinitely, but he can probably do it for long enough. He is both patient and persistent whereas Trump is neither. Netanyahu will jump through as many hoops as necessary, fly to Washington to kiss the ring whenever it's required, and sooner or later Trump will go chasing off after some other shiny object.

It should be easy to restart the war in Gaza once Trump is sufficiently distracted. Hamas fighters know that they will lose as badly in any future fighting as they did in the last round, but most of them will probably choose to die on their feet rather than live on their knees.

Israeli reservists might be a bit harder to motivate for yet another round of the war, but the habit of duty plus the promise of a mass expulsion of Palestinians at least from Gaza would probably be enough to get most of them back out one more time.

I'm not saying that all of this is bound to happen. I'm just saying that these are probably Binyamin Netanyahu's calculations at this moment in time – and that they are entirely rational and realistic, if



GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY

The Santa Claus Parade

When I was young, one of the many things that helped build our family's excitement for the Christmas season was the multitude of Santa Claus parades held all over our region.

We would enjoy our hometown Santa Claus parade and then visit neighbouring towns on the following weekends to enjoy their parades as well.

Most of the parades I remember had floats made from 18-wheeler flatbed trailers towed by big trucks, smaller trailers pulled by regular trucks or tractors, some lovely horse-drawn wagons, clowns handing out candy to all the kids, and an impressive number of marching bands from across the district. And, of course, the highlight of every parade was the appearance of Santa Claus at the very end.

One year in my early twenties, I had taken a job out of town. I made plans to go home for a visit one December weekend, but my family informed me they were going to see a Santa Claus parade in a neighbouring town that Saturday morning. Since I had to pass through that town on my way home anyway, I agreed to stop in and meet up with my family so we could all enjoy the parade together.

I arrived a little later than planned and finally found a parking spot—very far from where my family had gathered. Because the parade had already started, I decided to stay where I was and watch from there, then meet up with my family at our designated spot after the parade had completely passed by.

It was a nice parade, as always—very well done. But the planners made a minor strategic mistake that year in terms of float placement.

They put the horses toward the front of the parade.

Usually, that is not a big deal, because often you see some unlucky clown with a spade and a wagon and a silly little grin on their face following right behind the horses to scoop up any deposits they might leave on the street.

But that year, someone forgot to tag a clown for that undesirable duty. And that created an unforgettable parade memory for me.

The parade rolled along beautifully, with smiling clowns handing out candy to folks on the sidewalk and nicely decorated floats filled with happy, excited little kids joyously waving to everyone in the crowd—especially when they spotted

someone they knew! Very small-town, very endearing, and very Canadian.

Then along came a huge pair of Clydesdale horses, beautifully brushed and gussied up for the parade, sporting bells and ribbons and pulling a nicely decorated wagon. They looked stunning.

As the team passed the spot where I was standing, one of the Clydesdales took the opportunity to drop a big, steaming road apple right in the middle of the street!

And right behind the horses came a high school marching band.

The band was in perfect lockstep, playing a lovely Christmas tune. Suddenly, the guy marching at the front of the band—directly in line with the road apple—spotted it while playing his instrument. And so did his buddies on either side of him.

His eyes darted back and forth as he tried to find a way to avoid the upcoming doody dropping. He couldn't move around it, and his bandmates, all in rigid formation and sporting evil grins on their faces, wouldn't let him break rank anyway.

As the band got closer, I could see the wheels turning in the poor schmuck's mind, trying to figure out how to avoid stepping in the fresh fecal landmine he

was approaching.

Finally, the moment of truth was upon him.

And he did the neatest two-step I've ever seen in my life!

Everyone around me burst out laughing. The guy who did the two-step had a big, silly grin on his face afterward, and all the band members around him were grinning or chuckling under their breath as they continued to play without missing a beat.

Through sheer happenstance, the rest of the band managed to avoid the road apple. It wasn't a problem for any of the other floats or marching bands that came afterward, and the rest of the parade went off without a hitch.

It's funny the things you remember sometimes. Of all the happy Santa Claus parades I saw when I was younger, this is the funniest memory that still stands out for me to this day. And I still smile when I think about it.

Just one of those happy small-town memories that stays with you. Hope your Santa Claus parades brought you a few of your own!



KEITH SCHELL
REMEMBERING WHEN

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COMMUNITY VOICES

Monthly Message: Celebrating the season of giving at the Orangeville Food Bank

Every December, as the streets of Orangeville start to glow with holiday lights at Kaycee Gardens (thank you Optimists club of Orangeville) and the familiar hustle of the season is upon us, we take a moment at the Orangeville Food Bank and the Dufferin Food Share – Grand Valley to reflect on one of the most meaningful gifts our community gives: the gift of securities.

This month is always a time of celebration, gratitude, and looking ahead. For us, it's also a moment to shine a light on how gifts of securities-donations of stocks, bonds, or mutual funds-help build sustainable, long-term funding solutions for food support in our county. These gifts allow us to dream bigger, plan further, and respond with greater stability as needs grow. They help keep our shelves stocked, our programs strong, and our future secure. In a year when food insecurity has continued to rise, this kind of dependable generosity means the world.

Whether it's a traditional non-perishable food donation, a gift of securities, or the many innovative ways our neighbours support us, we see every day just how incredible our community is. And as we head into the holiday season, when many people rely on us more than ever, we want to make sure everyone has the information they need about our service hours and upcoming events.

Holiday Schedule Updates

The holidays are a joyful time, but they can also be stressful. We remain committed to ensuring no one is left without the resources they need and that our schedules are clear and accessible.



Orangeville Food Bank – Client Hours

- Monday, Dec. 22: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Tuesday, Dec. 23: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- Dec. 24, 25 & 26: Closed
- Tuesday, Dec. 30: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 31: Closed
- Thursday, Jan. 1: Closed
- Friday, Jan. 2: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

We will resume regular operating hours the following week.

Dufferin Food Share – Grand Valley Condensed Holiday Hours

- Tuesday, Dec. 23: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Dec. 25: Closed
- Tuesday, Dec. 30: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Jan. 1: Closed

Regular hours will resume the first full week of January.

We encourage anyone needing food support during the holiday period to visit during these scheduled times. We know this season can stretch household budgets, and we're here to help in every way we can. Please call us at 519-942-0638 if anything pops up.



Neighbours Community – Pay-What-You-Can Market

Our Neighbours Community Pay-What-You-Can travelling Market will be taking a well-deserved break. The market will be closed for the two weeks over Christmas and New Year's and will reopen for the Orangeville Market at Westminster on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

This program continues to be a beautiful example of what food dignity looks like, and we are so grateful for every volunteer, community partnership, and shopper who makes it possible.

Looking Ahead: The Coldest Night of the Year

Now, mark your calendars because one of my absolute favourite days of the entire year is right around the corner! The Coldest Night of the Year – or, as I like to call it, THE BEST DAY EVER – is happening on Feb. 28.

This event is our largest annual FUND-raiser, and every single dollar raised supports our neighbours right here in Dufferin County. Whether you join us for the 2K or

5K walk, sponsor a team, or rally your workplace to participate, your involvement helps keep people warm, nourished, and supported all year long.

You can sign up today at: en.cnoy.org/location/orangeville
If your business or organization is interested in sponsorship opportunities, please reach out to me at: carrie-anne.decaprio@orangevillefoodbank.org

The Coldest Night of the Year is so much more than a walk-it's a celebration of community, compassion, and the belief that we all deserve to be cared for. I promise you: If you haven't joined us before, this is the year to jump in.

A Final Word of Thanks

As we wrap up another busy year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every donor, volunteer, community partner, neighbour, shopper, walker, and supporter. The Orangeville Food Bank and Dufferin Food Share – Grand Valley are built on collaboration, respect, and the belief that a well-nourished community is possible when we look after one another.

This December, as you gather with loved ones or reflect on the year that's been, I hope you consider the impact you've made and the impact you can help us continue to make, because together we can! The gift of securities, of time, of resources, or simply of spreading the word... every gift matters. Every gift feeds hope.

From all of us, thank you – and warmest wishes for a safe, joyful holiday season.

Two Orangeville Otters achieve great results against top swimmers at international meets

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

The Orangeville Otters Swim Club is celebrating international performances by two of its swimmers.

Nethaya Mahadana Arachchi and Alyssa Smyth represented both the Orangeville Otters and Team Canada.

Nethaya competed at the Swimming World Cup at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre on Oct. 23 and 24, racing with some of the world's top swimmers.

Swimming the 50m backstroke, 100m backstroke, and 100m breaststroke, Nethaya set a personal best in the 50m backstroke, breaking her own open club record.

In a true display of community spirit, more than 50 Otters swimmers, joined

by 13 parent coaches, filled the stands on Thursday morning to cheer her on.

“On top of Nethaya getting the opportunity to race at the World Cup with some of the best swimmers in the world, our swimmers at home showed up in a big way too,” said Otters head coach Sam Kuntz. “The pride and team spirit were incredible. It was inspiring to see our club come together like that.”

Alyssa Smyth represented Team Canada at the Youth Parapan American Games in Santiago, Chile, from Nov. 6 to 8.

Alyssa competed in the 50m freestyle, 100m freestyle, 100m breaststroke, and 100m butterfly. She won gold in all four events.

Alyssa also achieved her international

classification, officially qualifying her to represent Canada in future international competitions.

Her outstanding performance was capped with a special honour – being named Canada's Flag Bear for the closing ceremonies. It was a moment that brought immense pride to both Alyssa and the entire Otters community.

Even with her busy training and competition schedule, Alyssa volunteers as a coach for the Mini Otter program on her day off, where club champions help guide and inspire the next generation of young swimmers.

Both Alyssa and Nethaya exemplify the Otters' values of dedication, resilience, and teamwork.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

SUCCESSFUL SWIMMERS: Two Orangeville Otters swimmers had good results during a recent international competition. Nethaya Mahadana Arachchi (left) competed at the Swimming World Cup at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre on Oct. 23 and 24, setting a personal best in the 50m backstroke category. Alyssa Smyth (right) competed with Team Canada at the Youth Parapan American Games in Santiago, Chile, from Nov. 6 to 8. Alyssa won gold in all four of her events.

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County encourages safe road sharing with cyclists, pedestrians, horse-drawn carriages

Safe transportation networks are key to ensuring that road users reach their destinations safely.

Dufferin County has many rural roads and road networks that are used by drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and even horse-drawn carriages.

“Home to a diverse population of citizens, Dufferin County has a longstanding history of Mennonites located throughout our community, especially in the rural municipalities of Melancthon, Mulmur and Grand Valley,” said Bruce Hillborn, manager of operations and fleet at Dufferin County.

“A certain community of Mennonites use the horse and buggy as a means of transportation. We must all work together to share our roads and keep our community safe while traveling.”

There are many factors to consider when prioritizing safety on county roads, such as soft gravel shoulders, hidden intersections and driveways, sudden turns and curves, poor lighting, and wildlife. These considerations apply to all road users.

But there are also specific laws and safety considerations that drivers must prioritize based on their chosen mode of transportation.

“We all have a role to play in ensuring road users get where they need to go safely throughout Dufferin County, no matter one’s chosen mode of transportation,” said Hillborn.

Safety for vehicular road users

The County of Dufferin asks that all road users prioritize safety for the entire community, including those in horse-drawn carriages.

If operating a vehicle, when approaching a horse-drawn carriage, drivers must ensure that they:

- Slow down and maintain a safe distance: Providing a safe distance ensures that should anything fall off the buggy, you can react in a timely and safe way. Horse and buggies can also roll back a few feet after coming to a complete stop. Maintaining a safe distance helps reduce accidents.
- Approach and pass with caution: Only pass when it’s safe, and there is plenty of space to do so without startling a horse or its driver.
- Reduce any unnecessary speeding, engine revving and loud noises: Horses are sensitive to loud noises and quick movements. Do not spook or startle horses.
- Pull over and stop if you see a horse in distress or out of control: Stay in a safe location until safe to move.

Safety for horse-drawn carriage users

Horse-drawn carriage users are asked to keep the following laws and safety considerations top of mind to help keep our roads safe:

- Have an orange and red slow-moving sign on your carriage: The Province of Ontario requires that a horse-drawn carriage be equipped with an orange and red slow-moving sign.
- Exemptions exist: If you are exempt from using this sign, you must have the back of the carriage outlined with reflective tape that is visible from at least 150 metres.
- Use reflective equipment like horse blankets, headlights and tail lamps or tape: Always make your horse and buggy vehicle as noticeable as possible, especially during conditions where there is limited visibility.
- Always obey all traffic rules and laws: Review the Highway Traffic Act to understand all rules and regulations of the road, especially as they relate to slow-moving vehicles.
- Ensure horse-drawn carriages fit entirely on the shoulder of a road: the operator must move the vehicle entirely into the road lane.

By sharing our roads and prioritizing safety, everyone can enjoy their travels in Dufferin County and ensure their friends, family, loved ones, and community members, including local Mennonites using horse-drawn carriages, get where they need to go safely.

Dufferin Oaks Long Term Care Home seeks community support for annual Be a Santa to a Senior Program

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Everyone deserves to get a gift for Christmas, and Dufferin Oaks wants to ensure seniors are remembered this year.

Angie Matthews, program and support services manager at Dufferin Oaks Long Term Care Home, said the Be A Santa to a Senior Program’s goal is to make Christmas morning special for the home’s residents.

“We started this initiative five to six years ago now, with the goal of providing every resident with a gift on Christmas morning,” she said. “We have 160 residents currently, and we’ve had fantastic community support in the past, leading to everyone in our facility getting to open a gift on Christmas morning.”

Every year, Dufferin Oaks looks to collect \$25 donations from generous residents, and each \$25 donation covers the cost of one gift. Sponsors can donate online or visit Dufferin Oaks to make a donation in person.

For those who might not have \$25 to spare during the holiday season, Matthews said it’s not an issue, and they should not feel obligated to meet that number. Every donation, no matter the size, is welcome and appreciated by Dufferin Oaks.

“Maybe someone can’t afford the \$25 donation, that’s perfectly fine, we’re happy to accept things that might be considered additions to the gifts,” she said. “For example, the Shelburne Soccer Club is collecting donated items like lotions, candy, jewelry, socks, and slippers... things like that. There’s something for everyone.”

Matthews also said that donations are accepted in both cash and physical items, but since the pandemic, more donations are coming in cash.

“I found that after COVID, more people are just looking for where they can send some money,” she said. “The donations are absolutely welcome, of course, and they allow the staff at Dufferin Oaks, who know our people very well, to shop for some personalized gifts.”

As the 2025 Christmas season approaches, the team at Dufferin Oaks hopes for the same community support they’ve seen in years past to return this year, helping make Christmas a little bit more special for the 160 residents who call Dufferin Oaks home.

Online donations via credit card can be made at www.dufferincounty.ca, in the online payments section.

Donations are being accepted until Dec. 15.

For more information on Be a Santa to a Senior at Dufferin Oaks, contact Angie Matthews at (519) 925-2140 ext 5242 or amathews@dufferincounty.ca.

Dufferin Oaks is managed by the County of Dufferin.




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- These are full-time positions, based on 88 hours of work per 2-week cycle, with occasional overtime. At this time, we are only looking for individuals who can work a 12-hour rotating continental shift, including nights and weekends.
- Salary \$24.50 - \$25.40 per hour, with possibility of bonus; 10 days vacation plus extended medical, dental, and long-term disability insurance & participation in our retirement savings plan.
- Inbound transportation costs for out of province applicants.
- Completion of high school required.
- At least two years of experience in the plastics recycling industry required; previous manufacturing experience is preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently on specific tasks and collaboratively within a small team to achieve production goals in a fast-paced, high-volume setting.
- Certified and experienced in operating various forklifts, including models equipped with clamps, with a strong emphasis on safety protocols, efficient loading techniques, and adherence to load capacities.
- Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Word) for data tracking, reporting, and analysis, with the ability to quickly learn and utilize industry-specific software (e.g., Presage) for operational data management.
- Competent in interpreting production data, identifying operational trends, and providing insights to improve sorting efficiency, production speed, and material quality.
- Knowledge of quality assurance methodologies, including experience with calibration tools and procedures to maintain sorting equipment's accuracy and reliability.
- Familiarity with PET/HDPE material handling, recycling processes, and industry-specific standards for processing and sorting recycled materials.
- Experienced in following shipping protocols, generating, reviewing, and organizing shipping documentation (BOLs), and ensuring compliance with transport and regulatory standards.

To view a comprehensive overview of the position, please go to <https://jobs.dayforcehcm.com/en-US/irss/CANDIDATEPORTAL/jobs/3305>. Interested candidates please send a copy of your resume and cover letter to cstewart@icriversprings.com or write to:

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Lots begin closing at 5pm on Dec 12th.
Preview: Fri Dec 12th, 10am – 4pm, or call for an appointment on another day.
Pickup: Sat Dec 13th, 10am – 4pm. Call or text if you need more information.

Pickup & preview at our Home Office Base: 438280 4th Line, Melancthon L9V 1S9 (North of Shelburne).

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THIS NEWSPAPER!

Headwaters Health Care Centre is planning large and long-term expansions

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Recognizing a growing need for services, Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) is planning a series of expansions over the next decade and beyond.

These expansions are intended to accommodate a growing population and an increasing number of hospital visits.

Kim Delahunt, president and CEO of Headwaters, delivered a presentation to Shelburne council on Nov. 24, outlining the hospital's long-term plan. She began with the most recent parts of the plan completed this year, focusing on two major projects.

"I wanted to just provide some updates about some of our big accomplishments from last year, before moving into what the hospital is focusing on this year and into the future," she said. "The first thing is the grand reopening of our updated and expanded dialysis unit."

"The other is the new MRI at Headwaters. I know everyone's been awaiting this for many, many years. It is fully running for seven days a week, and we're expecting 8,000 scans a year."

The MRI unit was an important project for the hospital, as Delahunt said their data showed that around 4,000 residents in the region had to leave to find MRIs elsewhere.

Looking into the future, the hospital expects a surge in demand for services over the coming decades.

Healthcare needs are anticipated to in-

crease and become more specific, according to Delahunt.

"In Ontario, the aging population is rapidly growing, and it's already putting a lot of strain on our healthcare system," she said. "It's only going to increase that strain. By 2040, more than 3.1 million Ontarians will be living with one or more chronic illnesses. Healthcare needs are becoming more complex."

To address the projected demand, HHCC is planning a series of large expansions based on predictive data.

The current Emergency Department (ED) was built to accommodate 23,000 annual visits, but is now reporting more than 37,000 patients. Delahunt added that HHCC expects to see more than 50,000 ED patients each year within the next decade.

The highest priority items for the hospital to develop are: Emergency Department, Obstetrics, Complex Continuing Care, Diagnostic Imaging, Critical Care Unit/ICU, Medical Device Reprocessing Department, and Pharmacy.

In the relatively short term, the Emergency Department is planned to expand by 3,500 square feet, and Diagnostic Imaging will expand by 750 square feet. This is done with the goal of reducing wait times and improving the flow of patients. The overall expansion of HHCC is expected to be 239,000 square feet over a 10-year period, further expanding to 333,000 square feet over a 20-year period.

In terms of costs, the long-term expansion



FILE PHOTO

sion is estimated to cost \$391 million in the first phase, and the total cost over 20 years is projected to be \$714 million.

Despite the massive spending requirement, Delahunt said that HHCC remains financially responsible moving forward.

"At Headwaters, we remain fiscally prudent," she said. "We are one of the few hospitals that are forecast to be balanced financially, while there's a number of the

majority that are facing large deficits."

To meet the growing needs of the region and the local community, HHCC is planning to nearly double its size and double its number of employees. With goals of long-term care and faster wait times in mind, Delahunt and HHCC are looking to stay ahead of the curve going into the future, with more services and new technological integration.

Make tails wag and wishes come true with the the SPCA's Home for the Holidays adoption campaign

The Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre is on a mission to make dreams come true this holiday season for animals and their new families with its Home for the Holidays adoption campaign, running until Dec. 24.

Last year, the Orangeville & District Animal Centre found loving homes for 655 animals. To date in 2025, it has already had more than 670 animals come into its care. The animal centre's goal is to find loving homes for 66 animals during the Home for the Holidays campaign. Animals adopted from the Ontario SPCA are spayed or neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated, and they go home with food from Royal Canin to help ensure a smooth transition into their new life.

With more people home during the holidays, now is an ideal time to welcome an animal into your family. Whether it's an affectionate cat who's been patiently watching others go home or a gentle senior dog still full of love to give, each adoption helps change a life – both for the animal and the

family who opens their heart.

"Every animal deserves to experience the joy of home," says Julie Woods, manager of Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre. "We have some very special animals who have been patiently waiting for a loving family to call their own and we're hoping this holiday season will be their time to finally make their wishes come true."

Those unable to adopt can still make a difference this holiday season. Donations help provide shelter and medical care for animals waiting for their forever homes. Supporters can also shop Paws & Give™, the Ontario SPCA's online giving store filled with gifts that give back – from gifts for that special someone on your list, to toys for shelter animals. Every purchase helps give animals in need a second chance.

Visit ontariospca.ca/adopt to meet animals looking for homes this holiday season or visit ontariospca.ca/orangeville to donate or shop Paws & Give™. Together, we can make this a season of love, hope, and happy new beginnings for animals across Ontario.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS: The Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre is running a Home For The Holidays adoption campaign until Dec. 24.

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