

A thanks for community outreach following Fort Mac fire

Over nine years ago, I left York Region for a new life in Fort McMurray. I was only supposed to stay for six months, but am still here and still loving this wonderful community. As many of you know, our community was recently devastated by a forest fire nicknamed The Beast. You likely saw those images in the news. I have never experienced such fear in my life. The shock and disbelief lingers at what we lived through; it shook us to our very core. Now, we continue to struggle while adjusting to the new norm for life here and the challenges of trying to clean up and rebuild. A few days after the evacuation, I returned to the Region, staying with my mother; a chance to get away from everything, and try and put it all in perspective, coping with the loss of my home and all the treasured mementos it held. Accompanying mum to various community events in Aurora such as the Rise and Shine Breakfasts, I was fortunate to meet people who had donated to the Canadian Red Cross relief efforts to benefit Fort McMurray. It was such a pleasure to meet these people and thank them personally as one of the evacuees who has benefited from that effort. Please know those donations, including the funds donated by the Aurora Town Council, have truly helped many people. I hadn't read a copy of The Auroran that first week home and as a result, didn't see the announcement of the benefit concert by the York Regional Police Male Chorus. Had I known, I would have definitely been there, knowing some of the members of that chorus and its co-ordinator, Supt. (Retired) Lowell McClenny. The speedy and thoughtful organization of this musical benefit and the generosity of those attending were truly appreciated. The efforts of the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion to help our local Legion members and families were wonderful. The photo of our Legion still standing relatively unscathed with Canadian flag still flying while the majority of the community around it burnt to the ground served as a beacon of hope for many. Putting the culinary touch on your fundraiser was fitting as our Legion does amazing Friday steak nights and a very tasty Sunday brunch. There are even a couple of members aged over 90 who are still active and founding members of the ROMEO Club ? Retired Old Men Eating Out. It was a relief to learn all those senior members were safely evacuated and some are already back. The generosity, love and support shown by people such as yourselves has been very much appreciated here and gratefully received. Again, thank you so much.

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