

Brown does the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge "in style"



By Brock Weir

If she was going to get drenched with a bucket of ice water, trust Newmarket-Aurora MP Lois Brown to do things in style.

Ms. Brown came to the season launch party of the North Newmarket Lions Club, held at an Aurora residence, on Sunday afternoon to accept the challenge issued to her by Mike Springford, a realtor and long-time community volunteer, involved not only in the Lions Club, but also Habitat for Humanity York Region.

Arriving to the party, Ms. Brown excused herself before she emerged wearing a floor-length black gown, complete with pearls, ready to take on the challenge to benefit ALS research.

"I have been challenged and I have decided to do it in style," said Ms. Brown as Mr. Springford held the bucket of icy water over her head. "I am supporting all those who are suffering with ALS and hoping that our contribution is going to help make ALS a forgotten disease."

As a long-time piano accompanist for the York Regional Police Male Chorus, Ms. Brown said she had a personal connection to the disease.

"I am doing this in memory of a very good friend, Xavier Hutton, who was a respected and wonderful member of the Chorus for many years, who died from ALS about 10 years ago," she said. "We miss Xavier and we hope this disease will be a forgotten disease through the money that is raised for research."

After the requisite soaking, Ms. Brown issued her own challenges: Ryan Sykes of the Accountants Association, "who I know is going to challenge all the accountants," Brian Patterson, president of the Ontario Safety League, with whom Ms. Brown has a long-standing work relationship as an active member of Operation Red Nose, a seasonal campaign designed to stop drinking and driving during the holidays, as well as Richmond Hill-based Senator Don Meredith.

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge was established earlier this year and took off significantly over the summer, spreading virally across many social media platforms, particularly Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The premise is simple "those challenged to take part can either be dunked and donate \$10 for ALS research, or decline the challenge by donating \$100.

As of Tuesday, the ALS Association alone has raised a whopping \$88.5 million through the Challenge.