

Kitchen Party helps raise more than \$23,000 for local mental health programs



Northridge Community Church, the local hub for the Salvation Army, offered maritime flavour on Thursday evening as they hosted a traditional Newfoundland Kitchen Party ? and more than 150 people raised tens of thousands for local mental health programs in the process.

The Salvation Army's headquarters on Leslie Street, just north of Wellington, was practically packed to the gills on September 18, as attendees enjoyed traditional Newfoundland food, live music courtesy of Off the Rock, a tribute to Great Big Sea, and lined up to kiss the cod and be sworn in as honorary Newfoundlanders.

As the Kitchen Party was an alcohol-free affair, Purity Syrup subbed in for the high-octane rum that is part and parcel of the Screeching In ceremony. If kissing the cod wasn't your thing, there were still plenty of fun to be had ? including a chance to play the spoons along with the band, indulge in some retail therapy, and learn more about the Salvation Army's work in Canada's most easterly province.

All told, the event raised an estimated \$23,774 for Northridge's community mental health programs.

Welcoming guests to the Kitchen Party were Northridge lead pastors Fred and Carolyn Reid.

Fred, who hails from Newfoundland, gave attendees a run-down of why they were there through humour ? leading guests in a brief lesson in the nuances of ?Newfie? slang.

?A kitchen party is where the best stories are told, where the best music gets played, and where everyone leaves with a full heart and a full belly,? said Fred. ?Tonight, we're here for more than a good time. This is a fundraiser for the mental health work and programming that we offer here at Northridge Community Church. We believe that mental health matters and, with your participation tonight, joining in the music and bidding on the silent auction, sharing in the food and the community that we foster in this place, you are helping us to continue to offer hope and care and support to those who need it most.?

Carolyn noted Salvation Army Northridge offers subsidized mental health support in York Region ?to the tune of over \$130,000 annually,? which equates to more than 1,400 individual mental health support sessions each year, in addition to hundreds of hours of group support sessions as well.?

?What our mental health team is able to do here, because of your partnership, because of the funds that we receive in our community, is to meet that great need that we see across York Region,? Fred added. ?Thank you very much for partnering with us

through your attendance, through your generosity, and through your support this evening of this wonderful cause.

?There's another phrase that we have [and] it's one we use to really convey a sense of blessing on one another, a sense of, 'Boy, I hope you really do well,' and it's fitting that at sort of the end of my time here [this evening] that I would say it over twice: long may your big jib draw.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter