

Saying "Right Back At Ya!" to Aurora United

By Brock Weir

Aurora United Church goes out of its way with community programs throughout the year, but now members of the church are taking an evening out of their busy schedules to say, 'Right back at ya!' in a special benefit concert.

The Right Back at Ya! Bash, an evening of dinner and dancing will take place this Friday, April 26 at Oakview Terrace in Oak Ridges. Featuring music from The Thursday Night Jam Band, organizers promise an evening of Motown and disco, a buffet, silent auction, and cash bar to support the many community programs that emanate from the church.

Julie Belgue, one of the organizers of the event cites the Church's Rise & Shine Breakfasts, morning coffee events, semi-annual rummage sales, Welcoming Arms nursery schools, parental supports, and Scouts and Brownies as just the tip of the ice berg of what the church provides to the community. Now it is time to give something back.

'The point is to raise some money to help the church keep plugging along, but when we stepped back and realised what our church offers back to the community, that is how we got the name because all the funds that come in go to our coffers and general account,' she says. 'In running our church we support all this stuff in our community. We're really giving right back just by existing and being on Yonge Street.'

As for the concert itself, it is something she says is a little bit different than your average church fundraiser and a far cry from what might first come to mind when parishioners think when they consider church fundraiser. The group of 40-somethings decided they wanted to have an event that appealed not only to their own demographics but a wide range of people looking to have a good time.

'I think people may have a perception that very stuffy people attend church,' she says. 'We are obviously Christian based people, but we know how to kick off our shoes and have a good time too. We had a couple last year who walked through the door and I thought this was going to be a gong show because the band gets loud, but they stayed on until the very end and had a great time. It's for all ages, but we're trying to draw on maybe the younger demographic side to start them attending our church and staying on into their later years.'

Tickets for the Bash are \$50 and to put this face value into a greater context, Ms. Belgue turns to the Rise and Shine Breakfasts, which recently wrapped up their season and is set to return this fall. One \$50 ticket, she says, translates into feeding 90 people at those breakfasts which provide an economical and nutritious breakfast for people in the community who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

'When something happens in your life - good, bad, or indifferent - to have a church community around you is such an amazing support that if people would even just come through the doors and give it a go, I think they would have this huge support system,' she says. 'It is like an extended family. You don't have to all believe in the same things, but when you sit in a church and you are surrounded by a community that know you by your first name and know your life in general, it is an amazing support to have.'