

SENIOR SCAPE: Make a Wish



By Jim L. Abram

We all remember the poem: Starlight, Star bright, the first star I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might, Have the wish, I wish tonight!

Seniors who made wishes as children are now wishing for different things. The Senior Wish Association is a wish granting charity that has a goal of improving the lives of seniors by operating a wish granting program, where seniors can have their wishes granted by a supporting community.

This past Wednesday at the Aurora Seniors Centre, Chris Ablett of the Aurora chapter of the Rotary Club was on hand to present a cheque in the amount of \$500 to Ingrid Davis, the York Region Representative of the Senior Wish Association for the benefit of seniors in York Region.

Want to deliver happiness?

Many of our seniors are lonely and may go long periods of time without a phone call or a visit from someone who cares. Their life partner may have passed away, family may be many miles away, or they don't have any family or loved ones. Some may be isolated in their homes and others may be surrounded by many people in a long term care or retirement home, but do not have anyone to call their own special friend.

The Senior Wish Association has volunteers who want to visit these lonely seniors and become their friend as part of their 'My New Friend?' program.

Holidays are a particularly challenging time if you don't have any loved ones to celebrate with. Do you know we have seniors who spend special holidays all alone? Do you know there are seniors in retirement and long term care homes that have never had a visitor, a special card or a thoughtful present?

One recent example of the Association's good work is their Christmas Stocking and Birthday Gift program. Their volunteers ask local senior facilities for the names of the residents who would be cheered up by receiving a Christmas stocking; along with new sleepwear (don't you remember Christmas Eve in your new flannel sleepwear and the fun of looking in your stocking Christmas morning?)

Donations of new pyjamas, nightgowns, slippers, housecoats, cuddly stuffed animals or items such as deodorant, hand lotion, face cream, soap, small boxes of cookies or candies or anything you would find in a Christmas stocking are gratefully accepted as are cash donations towards this project.

Some families and participants are 'adopting' one or two special seniors and making up a complete package for the senior.

Schools have also expressed interest to assist in the goal to provide intergenerational interaction. The response has been outstanding and the Senior Wish Association is working with each school on an individual basis to develop their project.

The Aurora-Newmarket Senior Wish Association is also initiating a program to record oral history from seniors in a long term care

residence. We all have stories to tell, stories we have lived from the inside out. The Association gives our seniors' experiences an order and organizes these memories into stories. Oral history listens to these stories, which, if we do not collect and preserve, will be lost forever.

High school students will be interviewing seniors and recording their memories into Memory Books. These books will preserve unwritten family history for seniors and their families, as well as being a valuable resource for historians.

Jimmy's last word: If you are interested in helping change a life for a senior, the Senior Wish Association wants to hear from you. Please call Ingrid Davis at 705-726-2120. They appreciate your support.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.