

Blue Doors Shelter honours volunteers

Aurora Banner | Jun 19, 2014

For 32 years, Blue Door Shelters has been an integral part of our community, providing emergency shelter for the homeless of York Region.

As a non-profit organization serving some 1,500 people each year, comprising families, men and youth, the agency reaches out to the community for donations and other assistance.

Last week at its annual general meeting in East Gwillimbury, Blue Door executive director Anne Stublely and staff also hosted an inaugural barbecue to thank those individuals and organizations whose support not only helps Blue Door and its clients survive, but thrive.

The agency that manages numerous support programs and three shelters, Leeder Place for families, Porter Place for men and York Region Youth for males between 16 and 26, depends heavily on the community, Stublely said.

“We couldn’t do it without them,” she said.

Accordingly, a committee was struck to identify and honour a representation of supporters among the myriad appreciated donors.

“It was hard to narrow it down,” she said. “We wanted to select a cross section of community groups that donate time, energy, products and services.”

Eight organizations were cited for their contributions to Blue Door Shelters:

- St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Newmarket;
- St. John Chrysostom Parish, Newmarket;
- Home Depot Bradford, Aurora, Newmarket;
- Mike Fenton of Paragon Security;
- Jamie MacDonald of Aurora Winter Blues Festival;
- York Region Media Group.

The parishes were lauded for seasonal help and the volunteer assistance from their congregations.

The three Home Depots’ continued support was “incredible,” she said. The trio of stores and volunteer staff provided funds and labour to renovate Blue Door’s youth shelter.

Paragon’s Fenton was applauded for spearheading a “huge piece of work,” that helped Blue Door focus on an initiative to keep clients, staff and visitors safe throughout the year.

“We couldn’t have afforded to do that on our own,” Stublely said.

The spotlight shone on MacDonald, the blues festival founder, for his kindness via an annual opening event that collects funds for three regional charities, including Blue Door.

“Jamie has provided us with great exposure and substantial funds”, she said.

The York Region Media Group, publisher of community newspapers in the region’s nine municipalities, received accolades for its contribution of advertising services, fundraising and donations of new books, caps and mitts.

“YRMG is absolutely fabulous,” Stublely said. “They’ve helped create community awareness for us and in addition to raising thousands of dollars, they have given us gift cards and movie passes that go directly into the hands of our clients.”

Among the many Blue Door helps each year, some 500 are guided toward permanent housing, she said. Because of growing demand and poverty levels, the agency regrettably has to tell 6,000 people each year that the shelters are full.

“That’s the tough part of the job,” she said. “Especially when they’ve been brave enough to call us.”

Find more information about Blue Door Shelters, including how to help, call 905-898-1015 or 1-888-554-5525 or visit their website .



Blue Door Shelters employee Ana Lopez serves food during the non-profit's annual general meeting, which featured a barbecue to honour organizations that have helped.

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