

Kennebecasis Lions Serving Community for Five Decades

by Jane Barry, The Greater Saint John Community Foundation

The Kennebecasis Lions Club has been serving the Kennebecasis Valley Area in its capacity as a local service club for fifty years, a record of which to be proud. Wayne Hicks, who now serves as President, is a relative newcomer, having joined three years ago, succeeding Bruce Madsen. He explains that the club is always recruiting new community-minded members who are interested in becoming more involved and giving back to their neighbours who may be in need. Through regular events such as pancake breakfasts, dinners and special occasion nights, its twenty-two members are able to significantly contribute to numerous charitable causes in the run of each year. Over five decades, it would be hard to estimate the value of those contributions but it is estimated that \$20-30,000 is raised annually.

Major capital projects have been supported by the KV Lions such as the ball field adjacent to the Community Centre, a large addition to the Centre itself and a facility which provides day programs for adults with disabilities. Five Lions Clubs serve across Greater Saint John.

By hosting local social events the Lions add to the spirit of community, bringing together many who enjoy a modestly costing opportunity to meet new and old friends. The events usually fall in the same time frames each year with a fall Harvest Supper being one tradition. They also put on an October yard sale which generates income for the club. In May, the Lions traditionally host a Ladies Night and also a Lobster Stag for the gentlemen. In February, a Pub Auction has proven popular. During the approaching holiday season their primary activity is a pancake breakfast. The proceeds will be donated to local firefighters who purchase and pack food baskets for families to enjoy at Christmas. Modestly priced for families, it is scheduled for December 12 from 9am-1pm at the Renforth Bill McGuire Memorial Centre, 97 James Renforth Drive.

Last summer, a special anniversary dinner was held for present and past members with over sixty-five in attendance. It provided an opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments which were recognized by their Divisional Governor, as representative from Lions International, who made a special flag presentation. Tony McGuire, twice served as the club's President and points out the framed charter at their community club headquarters. It lists the 25 original founding members, whose names are still well-known locally and whose next generations are now community leaders. The Centre is named for his brother Bill, who was also a Lion. Dr. Bill Weaver and Tony McGuire are the longest-serving and life members at 37years each but note the club is still growing as younger members sign on.

The club supports a number of causes annually which are reviewed regularly by their Financial Committee and then brought to the membership for approval. PASAGE Saint John, the Sophia Recovery Centre, Hospice, Special Olympics, Dr. David Stephen Foundation, Portage, Harbour Lights along with health charities like Heart & Stroke, Diabetes & Kidney Foundation and Cardiac Rehab are examples of causes they support. Each year scholarships and bursaries are awarded at KV and Rothesay High Schools in the names of Bill McGuire and Harry Miller. From time to time, individuals in need come to the group's attention and receive support as well. In a six year period recently almost \$50,000 was donated locally.

The welcome mat is out for new members interested in getting involved in their community. Contact Club President Wayne Hicks at 847-5955, Les Howard Treasurer or Secretary George Allen 633-0515 for information. The Kennebecasis Lions meet the first and third Friday 6:30 pm, at the Bill McGuire Memorial Centre, 97 James Renforth Drive, Rothesay.



Wayne Hicks, President and Tony McGuire, twice Past President and a life member, along with their fellow members of the Kennebecasis Lions Club, help serve the Kennebecasis Valley through the club which is celebrating fifty years of community service.

Photo by Jane Barry



Community Profile is a weekly column highlighting community causes and work done by non-profit organizations in the Greater Saint John area. It is contributed by Jane Barry, executive director of The Greater Saint John Community Foundation. Contact the Foundation at 506-672-8880 sjfoundation@nb.aibn.com. To view other Community Profiles go to www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca