

2017 Year in Review: February



February 2

? Christmas lights are beginning to twinkle throughout Orangeville in late January as part of a heartfelt tribute to Darryl Kirkland, a man whose life has impacted many over the years. On Jan. 27 the community began to mourn together as news broke that he had passed away at the age of 51, following a long battle with cancer. He leaves behind his wife Christine, and their two children, Emma and Joshua.

It's not abnormal to hear of teachers leaving a lasting impact on their students, but it does seem to be a rarity to hear of principals doing the same. To have someone in a position of responsibility over hundreds of students, capable of impacting most of them in a personal, positive way is an incredibly rare gift.

This was a gift Darryl had in abundance.

His teaching career began at Centre Dufferin District High School, where he taught until being promoted to vice-principal at ODSS. After Westside opened, he took over the same role there, eventually becoming principal at the school before transferring back to ODSS to take over the same position there in the late 2000s.

In the hours that followed news of his passing, a Facebook group was created called Remembering Darryl Kirkland. Nearly 1,000 teachers, students, colleagues, friends, and family have joined to share their fondest memories of him, the comments highlighting the incredible footprint he has left on our lives. Each post echoes the same sentiments of the school board in their stories.

? The Orangeville Public Library unveiled its new renovations at the grand reopening of its main branch on Jan. 28, with officials and members of the community turning out to mark the project's completion.

The renovation includes the creation of the spacious and uniquely designed children's room called 'Storyland', a new accessible family washroom on the top level, two new private study spaces and energy efficient lighting and new flooring. Local artists are featured in the renovated children's room. Theatre Orangeville built the Storyland entranceway, while the nature tree was constructed by Larry Kurtz. The artwork was donated by Bernadette Pinter of Old Style Design.

? Dufferin's Digital Historian Project (DHP) has officially been selected as an 'exemplary model' for experiential learning by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

The ministry was so impressed by the made-in-Dufferin secondary school educational project that it requested permission to design a video on its EDUGAINS website to promote the DHP to schools, boards, and community leaders across Canada.

February 9

? Acting Police Services Board chair Ken Krakar was elected as the lead via nomination by fellow Police Board member Anne Welwood, who offered two reasons as to why she felt Mr. Krakar would be the right person be Chair.

She stated that it was 'important to rotate the chair' and she felt that the board 'needed a third strong voice' within the town. The decision to put Mr. Krakar forth as Chair was not quite unanimous. All voted in favour with the exception of the former Board chair, Mayor Jeremy Williams who shared, 'I am sorry Ken, I will vote no.'

Recently, Mayor Williams made it public that he would like to be reinstated as Chair of the OPSB.

The mayor was removed from the lead position in mid-2016 after inconsistencies were reported in his expense filings. The Peel

Police investigated and eventually the matter was dropped with no charges laid.

Orangeville Food Bank's new 'Shopping Model' allows clients to shop as if they are in a real grocery store, giving the food bank a new look and changes in the way it serves them.

Introduced in mid-December, the shopping model came from a committee, made up of board members, volunteers, and Heather Hayes, Orangeville Food Bank's Executive Director.

Previously, clients filled an order, and a volunteer got the food, but now they can go in themselves and pick the food. Clients are called in to the back, can be accompanied by a volunteer, or a 'concierge', given a shopping cart and take a 'grocery list' of what's available in the food bank, with a points system allocated based on how many people per family, and the kind of food, along with a limit for certain items.

Following months of careful planning and precise preparation, one Dufferin County resident is looking forward to launching a 'sisterhood' unlike anything the region has ever seen before.

Lori Robertshaw first bought into the premise behind Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers in early 2016 after spending a significant amount of time searching for a local 'backyard' charitable organization she could dedicate her volunteer energy towards. Now, she's hoping to expose the entire community to the necessary service the association provides.

Here in Orangeville, Family Transition Place has been identified as the sole beneficiary of the local Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers chapter's efforts once the group officially introduces itself to Dufferin County with its inaugural cooking event on Feb. 26

The Orangeville hockey community has lost a much respected and longtime associate of minor hockey.

Ray Hunt, known by many as 'Mr. Hockey', passed away at Stratford General Hospital on Friday, February 3.

Mr. Hunt was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease seven years ago and recently was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He was 72 years old.

His involvement with Orangeville Minor Hockey spanned more than 30 years during which time he held many executive positions with the association including CAO and also served as a past president of the Tri-County Hockey League.

He was recognized by Minor Hockey when they named the annual Christmas tournament the Ray Hunt Christmas Classic House League Tournament.

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It has taken several years, but Orangeville Council and the greater public now have an answer as to how much it would cost the municipality to move community policing from the Orangeville Police Service (OPS) to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).

Following a 2 1/2-hour presentation and discussion, Sergeant Kevin Hummel, a contract analyst with the OPP's Municipal Policing Bureau, told Orangeville council it would cost just north of \$7.8 million annually for the provincial body to provide the community's policing services, with an additional \$1 million required in the first year to cover 'one-time startup and capital costs', bringing the actual first year amount up to \$8.7 million.

Dufferin County council may find themselves with a bigger job on their hands than they initially thought when it comes to dealing with poverty after county consultant Eden Grodzinski provided some shocking statistics in a specially commissioned report she presented to the municipality last Thursday, Feb. 9.

Contracted by the county's Poverty Task Force in 2016 to conduct a study to see what poverty looks like in Dufferin, Ms. Grodzinski pulled no punches in her revelation that poverty is a growing problem in the county.

According to the statistics provided in the report, roughly 10 percent of Dufferin residents currently live in poverty, while one in 12 residents are considered food-insecure whereby they are lacking in reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious food. One in 14 participants in the labour force is currently unemployed, while one in nine households is living in core housing need, which, by definition, means residents spend more than 30 percent of their total before-tax income to pay for rent or a mortgage.

February 23

As the clock continues to tick down on the popular Teddy Bear Playschool program at Orangeville District Secondary School (ODSS), one local resident is refusing to sit back and simply watch the long-time local initiative die without a fight.

When Tricia Hebert first learned that the provincial government had effectively pulled the plug on the program after making changes to its child care regulations in 2015, she decided pretty quickly that she wanted to stand up and do something about it.

With almost 30 years of history in the community, the Teddy Bear Playschool program has provided hundreds of students with the opportunity to learn first-hand about children and how to properly care for them.

Open to students in Grades 11 and 12, the initiative forms a key part of the school's Working with Infants and Young Children course and sees the high-school seniors work directly with a collection of pre-schoolers twice a week in order to fully experience

what it's like to take care of a child.

On Tuesday, Ms. Hebert was joined by several local parents and students in hosting a peaceful demonstration outside ODSS in hopes of raising awareness throughout the community that this 'wonderful' program is at risk of shutting down for good.