

16th annual Miracle Treat Day to raise funds for SickKids



By Mike Pickford

Christmas is just around the corner for one local business, as Orangeville's Dairy Queen franchise gets set for its 16th annual Miracle Treat Day.

The annual fundraiser has become a summertime staple for the community, drawing thousands of local residents seeking to satisfy their sweet tooth, while at the same time knowing they're helping a more than worthy cause. Since launching the event in town back in 2003, more than \$510,000 has been raised for The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto.

That number is a huge testament to the heart and spirit of this community, says Orangeville franchisee John Lockyer, who is one of only a handful of Dairy Queen representatives who donate the full cost of a Blizzard to charity on the day.

This is for charity, so absolutely everything we bring in that day through selling Blizzards goes to charity, Mr. Lockyer told the Citizen. We choose to donate the entire price of a Blizzard on that day. This isn't just a proceeds deal, if someone comes in and pays \$3.99 for a Blizzard, then we donate \$3.99 to Sick-Kids. For one day we suck up all the labour and food costs and donate everything we receive.

He added, Some stores do a portion, but more and more are getting on board now, donating the whole price. I'm very lucky because I've never been touched by SickKids, but every time you turn around and talk to somebody you hear about experiences they've had with the hospital. It's an amazing facility that does an awful lot of good for an awful lot of people. We're just trying to do our part to help.

The local store was the second top fundraiser amongst Dairy Queen franchises across the country last year, after raising a little over \$60,000. The Orangeville community came together to purchase 6,603 Blizzards on the day a record total in town. Mr. Lockyer is hoping the community will come out in a big way once again this year, setting an initial goal of \$62,500. As of press time, the store has already raised a little over \$17,000 through selling its paper balloons and raising money at community events.

We're so very lucky that our community helps us. For this small community to raise all this money is a testament to the type of people we have here in Orangeville. They don't care about the waiting in lines, it's amazing. Everyone has a smile on their face when they come in and an even bigger one when they leave, Mr. Lockyer said.

He reserved special praise for his staff too, who often forego portions of their wage to help out on the big day.

Miracle Treat Day takes place next Thursday, August 9, and will feature several local celebrity guests, including this reporter.

Several dignitaries and athletes are also penciled in to put on an apron and help serve Blizzards to eager customers. Five child ambassadors will also be on hand over the course of the day, sharing their own personal story about how SickKids hospital helped them to where they are today.

Since Dairy Queen's partnership with Children's Miracle Network (CMN) began back in 1984, the organization has raised more than \$130 million in support of sick and injured children across North America. CMN says its partnering hospitals treat 16,000 children in the emergency room and carry 2,329 surgeries on children every single day. Approximately one in 10 children in North America are treated by a CMN hospital each year, with services provided to more than 10 million children.

In 2017, SickKids recorded 16,832 admissions, 80,479 emergency visits and 235,542 total clinic visits.

?I'm excited. It's going to be a great day once again. We'll open our doors, welcome thousands of locals and, at the end, raise a heck of a lot of money for SickKids,? Mr. Lockyer said.

Miracle Treat Day will run in Orangeville from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Aug. 9. Stop by at any time throughout the day to enjoy a Blizzard. Wait times will be managed as effectively as possible. To pre-order your Blizzard, or to purchase pre-order coupons, visit the local store, located at 540 Riddell Road. For more information, visit miracletreatday.com.