

Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser to support Orangeville Food Bank

By Brian Lockhart

There's a very good reason the Orangeville Food Bank holds their main fundraiser during a cold evening in February.

They want you to experience what it is like for a person who has no vehicle to walk to the Food Bank, pick up supplies, then have to walk home in the cold air with a load of groceries in their arms.

The Food Bank will be hosting its annual Coldest Night of the Year walk on Saturday, February 23.

The goal is to raise \$60,000, which will cover the organization's rent and utilities for one year.

"We only do two fundraisers each year and this is our big national event that is happening right across Canada," explained Food Bank executive director Heather Hayes. "This is the second year participating. Food banks do not receive federal or provincial funding. Most of our funds come directly from donations. The reason it is called the Coldest Night of the Year is because people don't always realize the challenges that some low income people face. Many people walk to the Food Bank, get supplies, then must have to walk home again in the cold."

This year, organizers will be distributing bags weighted with 25 pounds, to walkers along the route to give them an idea of the challenge some people face when walking home on a cold winter night. The Food Bank typically distributes 25 pounds of food to a person who visits.

"After last year's walk we established a great relationship with Westside Secondary School students," Ms. Hayes said. "Students take some of our excess food and create meals. They make chili, and a vegetarian option. Culinary students make meals every week that are given to our clients. The students have to be creative with what we can give them. Our clients can get hot nutritious meals."

To participate, you can sign up individually or as part of a team and take a walk for a good cause.

There are 2km, 5km, and 10km walking route options, and hot chocolate and a warm light meal will be served to all walkers and volunteers.

The Coldest Night of the Year walk will take place on Saturday, February 23, with the start taking place at Westside Secondary School.

Registration will open at 4:00 p.m., followed by opening ceremonies at 5:00 p.m., and the walk at 5:15 p.m.

To register on-line visit www.cnoy.org/orangeville.