

5th Annual Rotary Ribfest likely to be best ever

With only one week left to go before Ribfest, it's hard to miss the excitement being generated throughout the Rotary Club of Orangeville (RCO) and the community. While the festival has only existed in Orangeville for five years, it has fast become a favourite event for many people.

The event, which runs from Friday, July 18, until Sunday, July 20, features six 'amazing Ribbers,' live music, a midway for the kids, vendors market and the High Flying Canines show. Plus, a fan-favourite over the last few years has been the Road Hazards Classic Car Show on Saturday evening.

'We've got a really great entertainment line-up for the weekend,' said RCO president Ingrid Sproxtun. 'I think it's even better than last year, and last year was pretty darn good.'

Performers on the stage will include the Hannah Chaplain Trio and Scrumpy Jack on Friday, Rythmfoot and Chanda's School of Dance, Terry Tufts, Tone Dogs, Touch of Blonde and Camp Fire Poets on Saturday, and for Bluegrass Sunday, Finally Tuned, End of the Road, Rhyme 'n' Reason and Traditionally Wound.

'It really helps with the community party feel,' said Ms. Sproxtun. 'You've got awesome performances on Friday and Saturday that pump the mood up, and on Sunday it's a bit more of a relaxed feeling with the Bluegrass for the wrap-up of the event.'

Over the five years, the Rotary Club has seen a 67 per cent increase in the number of people attending the event. From their launch in 2010, which saw about 9600 attendees through the gates to the 16,000 people through the gates last year, they have high hopes for this year as well.

'It's really a great festival for the community, and it's a part of the community,' said Ms. Sproxtun. 'I've noticed throughout the years that when you look out over the crowd at Ribfest, you just see a lot of smiling, happy faces.'

Ribfest was originally launched as part of a fundraising initiative by the RCO to help raise money for the new Splashpad to be installed at Fendley Park. The project officially broke ground last month, and should be open by late August.

'So far we've raised over \$140,000 towards the Splashpad through the last four years,' said Ms. Sproxtun. 'Hopefully this year's Ribfest is going to help put us over the top in terms of our commitment to the town in fundraising.'

Admission is free, but donation bins are set up at the entrance for anyone wishing to make a donation to the project.

'We didn't want to make this an event where people had to pay to get in, but because it is a fundraiser we wanted to put the donation bins out,' she said. 'All donations are gratefully accepted, no matter what size.'

One thing the Rotary Club still needs is volunteers to help run the event. Most volunteers in the past have worked an average of eight hours over the weekend, and for high school students, the hours can count towards their community service.

'Ribfest wouldn't be possible without the many volunteers who set up, manage the waste/recycling sessions, serve beverages, wipe down chairs and tables, and all the other things that keep the venue looking great and Ribfest running smoothly,' said Ms. Sproxtun. 'You can never have too many volunteers for an event like Ribfest because there is lots to do.'

Anyone interested in volunteering for the event can sign up via volunteerdufferin.ca or by contacting the RCO volunteer coordinator through the ribfest website at www.orangevill Ribfest.com.

'We're really excited to see everyone come out again this year and have some fun,' said Ms. Sproxtun. 'It's just a great party atmosphere with the bands on stage, the awesome ribs and all the things to do. It's a really pumped up event and lots of fun for the

family.?