

Hospice Dufferin's first annual Spooktacular Scavenger Hunt fast approaching

By **Sam Odrowski**

Halloween is around the corner and the spirit of the season can be felt throughout Dufferin County with carved pumpkins popping up on doorsteps and scary decorations covering many people's homes.

To celebrate the spooky season, Hospice Dufferin is hosting a brand-new event, called the Spooktacular Scavenger Hunt, which is running from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. next Saturday (Oct. 23).

Those who participate in this family-friendly event will embark on a Halloween themed journey through Orangeville, Shelburne, or the whole of Dufferin County, while supporting businesses in the area.

The event will begin at 30 Centre Street in Orangeville where a map of participating business and private residences will be handed out, along with a passport that gets stamped when participants visit each location on the map. Upon completion, the passport is entered into a draw for a variety of prizes donated by several Dufferin businesses.

"The whole concept is really to provide families with something fun to do, as well as helping to support our business community because it's our businesses that helps us support Hospice Dufferin," explained RaDeana Montgomery of Hospice Dufferin, who's organizing the event.

"We know that because of COVID, the business community has been the hardest hit, so we thought that by creating something that was family oriented but also got people out visiting businesses in Dufferin County they might get into a business that they've never been into before."

Montgomery added that the event is also a good way of spreading awareness about the services Hospice Dufferin provides.

"There's a lot of confusion sometimes about what Hospice Dufferin does in our community because we're not a residential hospice," she said. "We provide community support, and have been since 1988 almost 35 years in our community."

Hospice Dufferin supports caregivers as well as people living with a life-threatening illness, grief, or bereavement through a variety of programs offered in the community.

The hospice is responsible for coming up with 40 per cent of its budget each year with an annual goal of \$100,000, which is why it holds seasonal fundraiser like the Spooktacular Scavenger Hunt.

The cost to participate is \$25 per family, which includes a free pumpkin for the first 25 registrants as well as a trick or treat bag, and all of the proceeds help support Hospice Dufferin. To register and get a copy of the passport and map ahead of time, visit: hospicedufferin.com.

Montgomery noted that she's anticipating upwards of 50 businesses and houses will be included throughout Dufferin County. Routes will be available that are specific to Orangeville or Shelburne, as well as the whole of Dufferin County for residents wanting to travel across the region.

"The businesses and homeowners are on board and they're excited," said Montgomery. "It's just something different that we don't have in the community. So, to me, it's a fun day of exploring Dufferin County and learning about the businesses, as well as finding out what we do."

The scavenger hunt will feature fun contests like Best Costume and Best Social Media Post. Participants are encouraged to dress up

in costume and some of the participating businesses will be handing out candy, so the event also provides a bit of a trick or treating opportunity ahead of Halloween.

Montgomery said Hospice Dufferin is encouraging participants of the scavenger hunt to post to social media at the photo backdrops set up at various locations.

She told the Citizen she's hoping to see over 50 families register for the event.

Going forward, Montgomery said Hospice Dufferin is planning on making the Spooktacular Scavenger Hunt into an annual event.

She said she'd encourage everyone to register for the event at hospicedufferin.com to enjoy a fun Halloween event with the family next Saturday (Oct. 23).

"Not only is it fun but they have the chance to win some great prizes too," Montgomery enthused.