

PoliticalSpeak - December 2010

This year, our communities were inspired by the examples of young people who wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. We saw Katie O'Connell at Halifax West High School create a video to inspire other students to Run for the Cure. We saw Behraam Raja of Basinview Drive School organize a fundraiser for flood victims in Pakistan -- and reach double his goal. And we saw the Canadian Red Cross Society honour Bedford Junior High School student Logan MacGillivray -- its youngest award recipient ever -- for his work helping children in Sierra Leone with his charity, Listen To The Children.

With their inspiring young examples in mind, I thought I'd pass along the names of some local charities that you might want to consider as worthy of your support -- whether you want to honour someone with a gift in their name, or whether you would like to make some end-of-the-year donations yourself.

The Turkey Club - The Turkey Club of Bedford supports a number of worthwhile organizations; last year, the Club distributed \$64,500 throughout HRM. While most of their fundraising activity is centred on the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas each year, you can donate online all year long at www.turkeyclub.org.

Hospice Society of Halifax - This year, the Hospice Society of Greater Halifax moved into the Teachery on Spring Street in Bedford. Hospice volunteers have worked hard to renovate the main floor of this house; now they will move their efforts upstairs as they create rooms for the terminally ill to end their days in peace. The Hospice also runs bereavement groups to help those dealing with grief. To donate, contact www.HospiceHalifax.org.

Beacon House/ Feed Nova Scotia - This season is tough on those who don't have money for gifts -- let alone enough to eat. Beacon House (which is part of the Feed Nova Scotia network) distributes hampers to needy families and individuals at this time of year. It also has a terrific store where you can purchase lightly used sports equipment -- a terrific choice if you have any quick-growing kids to purchase for. To donate, go to http://www.feednovascotia.ca/howtohelp_donate.html. There is a Christmas Campaign underway.

Chalice - This international aid charity is headquartered here in Nova Scotia and helps the poor -- especially children -- in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Haiti. I first heard about it this past summer, when MoneySense Magazine gave it an "A" rating in the International Aid & Development category -- the highest rating in that group! Chalice sponsors individuals, communities and organizations in poor countries; you can sponsor a child, or purchase items ranging from chicks and ducklings (\$15) to a visit to the doctor (\$25), from a mattress (\$35) to a sanitation system (\$100) -- and much more. To read some inspiring stories about how Chalice has changed lives, check out www.chalice.ca; you can donate online there.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone time with their loved ones this holiday season. Geoff and I are looking forward to our daughters' return from university for Christmas; we hope your holiday is a happy one too.

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