

Fundraising in the middle of a world-wide pandemic is not a comfortable situation.

The usual techniques for fundraising have to be discarded and new methods sought for each community. At times fundraising opportunities just fall into your lap because of the conditions people all are in.

In the Bayfield community a birdhouse fundraising project was brought forward by one of the Directors of the Bayfield Agricultural Society who became the intermediary between two of our seasoned members. Both of these members have had major changes in their lives and birdhouse making and painting became their way to deal with it.



One of these folks had taken up residence in a local retirement home so her medical needs could be better managed. She was always very active and found residential life was not as stimulating as she would like. Her cousin, who visits her regularly, thought resuming painting might be an excellent creative pastime and provide a rewarding experience; however, finding things to paint became a challenge.

The other member had just moved into a 55+ community townhouse complex with his wife from a hobby farm not far away. He found not doing things as in the past frustrating and so he would go back to his workshop at his farm to tinker away his time. When told about the need for something that could be painted, he came up with the idea of painting birdhouses that he would make with scraps. And so, the project began!

He would make birdhouses; they would be taken to the lady for painting and then he would seal them for outdoor use. The challenge then was what to do with this growing number of birdhouses that were covered with painted birds, other wildlife, outdoor scenes, and landscapes. The two decided to donate them to their church and their Agricultural Society.

Currently over \$1000 has been raised by the Bayfield Ag Society so far from the generosity of two people who needed something fulfilling and worthwhile to spend time on. As the weather is getting colder the two have gotten together to plan what they might diversify into for the winter months. Talk is that bird feeders are possibly the next project.

One of our Directors is going through cancer treatments and he decided to join the project and began building a different style of birdhouse to keep busy as his treatments progress. Some others on the Board are picking up discarded wood from building sites, with permission, and delivering to the two men for their wood stock.

The availability of the birdhouses has been advertised online throughout the village. One person wanted all the birdhouses with one particular bird painted on them since it was his favourite. Another brought her grandchildren to choose a birdhouse because she wanted them to have a reminder of the fair which she has enjoyed since her youth. Another wanted one for decoration as a reminder of both the builder and painter and insisted that both sign the house. The houses became a link between the people and the fair or Society.

Three people who are all going through major changes in their lives have connected with the common bond of helping organizations in their community. Covid or not, they are not letting a little pandemic put a roadblock into supporting fundraising for their favourite causes or curtail what each of them needs to do to fill their time with valuable activity. The Ag Society absolutely feels blessed that it has such generous, talented and thoughtful members who are helping it get through these very unusual times.

*We are just one small story throughout Ontario of people who do extraordinary things for their communities.
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