

Fall Tea for Seniors hosted by The Good Companions - Community Support Services



Toes were tapping at the Fall Tea for Seniors hosted by The Good Companions - Community Support Services at St. Columba Church on 5 October. On stage, the "Rare Vintage" trio, composed of David Hayes, lead singer, John O'Connell on keyboard, and Terry Boehmer on trumpet, played and sang familiar favourites from the past and present, accompanied by comic patter and exchanges with the audience. One senior in the audience was overheard exclaiming with joy, "My grandparents used to sing that song!" A glance around the room revealed people singing along with obvious enjoyment. It is amazing how many lyrics the human brain can hold. At age fiftyplus, iPod is superfluous.

Approximately forty-five men and women came, brought by friends or volunteer drivers, and by ParaTranspo and OTranspo. They came from Manor Park, and other nearby areas. Some were already registered with The Good Companions while others learned of the event from the Chronicle, from St. Columba Church, or from friends. Word had spread quickly on The Good Companions' grocery buses.

Everyone was warmly welcomed by Judy Bedell, Director of The Good Companions - Community Support Services, and her colleagues, Carolyn Calder and Anne Kendall, before tea, sandwiches and delicious cookies and squares were served in the Church Hall, beautifully decorated in a fall motif by St. Columba parishioners.

The conversational buzz was high. Many interconnections were discovered. Musician John O'Connell, for example, taking a break for refreshments, learned in a chat with Georgia Bruce of Farnham Avenue that she knew many members of his family in the Maritimes.

As the afternoon drew to a close with the presentation of door prizes, the question was heard circulating around the room, "When can we meet again?"

The occasion underlined the fact that Manor Park is very much a multi-generational neighbourhood. Anyone who has gone door-to-door for one cause or another is aware of this, and some residents may know their senior neighbours, but the fact that many older residents cannot get out and about easily may conceal their numbers. "Who lives in that pretty, well-maintained, house with the nice flower-beds and window boxes?" we may wonder, "I never see anyone around." If you were to come to a Good Companions' tea, you might find out. These events help the organization identify people who could benefit from the many services they offer to help seniors continue on in their own homes - services such as cleaning, repairs, snow-clearing, transportation and escort to medical appointments, and assistance with shopping, or connections to friendly visitors.

With this new partnership between The Good Companions - Community Support Services and St. Columba Church, it is hoped that the Fall Tea will be the first of many more happy events for seniors in Manor Park.

(For further information about The Good Companions - Seniors' Centre and / or their Community Support Services, to make a referral, or to volunteer, call **236-0428**, or visit their website at: www.magma.ca/goodcompanions/)