

Holly jolly Christmas donation

Royal Bank donates \$32,000 to SideDoor Youth Centre

by Kevin Allerston
Northern News Services

The sounds of children singing filled the SideDoor Youth Centre last week as the centre held its annual Christmas concert on Dec. 8. The centre received a \$32,000 donation from the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) to its Junior SideDoor Program.

Ron Sauve, regional vice-president North of 60 with RBC, was at the concert to deliver an over-sized cheque to the youth group.

"It was just exciting to be part of that. You can definitely see there are needs; you can definitely see there are all kinds of costs," said Sauve. "We gave them \$32,000 and that's just a small drop in the bucket when you consider their operating expenses."

It costs the SideDoor \$1 million a year to operate its seven programs, which includes the Junior SideDoor program. The SideDoor Youth program costs approximately \$46,000 a year to run. The SideDoor and RBC have been partners since 1999, and during that time RBC has donated approximately \$250,000 to the centre.

After the official presentation, Sauve and SideDoor executive director Garry Hubert let the kids hold up the novelty cheque as they continued singing Christmas songs.

Sauve said he hopes their donation will help inspire others to see what ways they can help support groups like SideDoor.

"Because \$32,000 is a big chunk of money, but it doesn't go a long way, that's for sure," said Sauve.

Nine-year-old Kendall Collins was at SideDoor for the Christmas concert.

"Thank you very much for letting me go to the centre," said Kendall, when asked how she feels about the donation.

She said she was shy, but had a great time singing, especially Silent Night.

Hubert said the money is well appreciated, with the money going to pay for programming and wages.

"We have roughly 30 youth who come to the centre on a daily basis and use the service," said Hubert. "And so that's just going to help offset some of the staffing, materials and food that's supplied through the program."

As for the caroling, he said it's great to see the kids having a good time.

"It's amazing to see how the kids are pouring out their hearts and singing the Christmas carols and it's just a special feeling for us, the board and the staff to see the smiling faces for providing a great service to the community," said Hubert.



Fraser Goulet leads children at the SideDoor Youth Centre in a spirited rendition of Hark! The Herald Angels Sing during the organization's annual Christmas concert on Dec. 8.