

Carolling Around the Neighbourhood

by Melissa Friesen
 For the last five or so years, the students at Sturgeon Creek Alternative Program have found a way to bring the festive sounds of carols to residents of Emo. The carolling endeavour has taken different forms throughout the years. One year, early on, they made their way to different houses in the subdivision adjacent to their school

only to realize that daytime wasn't exactly the right time to find most people in their homes. By now they've figured out a system that works - three groups heading to three different locations where they're guaranteed to find people who could use some cheer. One group goes to Cloverleaf, where they sing to hurried shoppers, lunchtime stoppers, and busy store work-

ers. The next group sings into the rooms of the hospital where residents can listen from the comfort of their own rooms or congregate in the hallways. The third group gathers in the meeting room at the Golden Age Manor, where residents sit with cups of coffee and nod their heads to the familiar tunes. Stephanie Goodman, the Supervisor/Teacher at Sonshine Christian Kinder-

garten in the SCAP building has been carolling with the students since the beginning. She noted that from her experience this year in Cloverleaf, people seemed to be touched by their gesture. "I noticed some of the staff as they were stocking the shelves were singing along. A couple customers came in and watched for a bit as well. Others were busy and kept moving but they all

smiled and seemed to appreciate it." She can only speak for herself about why she thinks the carolling activity is worthwhile, calling it, "an opportunity to give back to the community." In particular, Cloverleaf provides the food for SCAP's breakfast and hot lunch program. "Also reaching out to the elderly and those who can't get out is important. A lot of

the kids have relatives in the manor or the hospital so it's special in the sense of building community within the family." Lastly, she says, "it's a way for us to proclaim what we believe Christmas is all about in a fun way, singing, laughing and having a good time."



Nothing like audience participation! A shopper at Cloverleaf enthusiastically joins in song with Yvonne Veldhuisen as the group warmed up their vocal cords outside the grocery store.



Each group consisted of "school buddies" from Kindergarten to 12th grade and a few adult chaperones. The groups stayed in their locations for about 30-40 minutes.



Duncan, Tim, and Logan cluster together with their schoolmates and sing in the hallway of the Emo hospital.



Like many others, June and Lyle Wheatley listen to the songs from the students in their room with the door wide open.



It may look a bit chaotic, but the message and meaning were heartfelt. The students entertained the residents that the Golden Age Manor Monday afternoon.



Hailey, Thea and Julia read the Nativity Story from their sheet along with the group.



In between songs, residents were invited to share their own favourite memories. Henry Kaemingh recounted a Christmas on the farm from a few years ago as being one of his favourites.



Would you like some Coca-Cola with your carols? Once inside Cloverleaf, the group congregated in various aisles and corners of the store.



A lot of the planning for the activity was done by the student council with the help of Kelly Agar. Following the carolling, each class partook in some cookies and hot chocolate.