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This is the 11th installment of a series, prompted by stories that have appeared in The News, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Multi-Service Centre (MSC).

The November 22, 1978 *News* featured the first column submitted by Information Tillsonburg. It promoted community programs and services as well as local happenings (from adult ballet classes to a Chamber of Commerce symposium on capital punishment). Fittingly, since November 15 is Philanthropy Day, that first column still resonates today as a wide range of donors were also thanked: CKOT and the *News* for publicizing the new agency; organizations, clubs and agencies for taking the time to explain their services; and industries, clubs and individuals "whose donations will make services FOR the community IN the community". Amen!

The gift that got everything started was the house donated by Gerry Livingston and family in 1978. The *News* profiled that donation as well as many other early events: a Flying Fathers/Old Timers hockey fundraiser organized by the Knights of Columbus and MSC board members (July 25, 1979); a baseball draft where Fergie Jenkins was the featured guest (October 1981) and several slo pitch tournaments over the years. Sports was a big theme in those days, and the MSC, like many in the community, is grateful to the *News* for all the smiling "cheque-in-hand" photos and coverage.

One of the highlights of 1980's fundraising were events held on February 22/23, 1985 in honour of Gerry Livingston. Proceeds from that weekend (including a hockey game and dinner) were directed to the MSC and were widely covered in the *News*. One of the photos shows Gerry dropping the puck surrounded by Ronald McDonald, Dave Hutchison, Chico Maki and Eddie Shack.

MSC fundraising in the 1990's became more focused on regular, annual activities. The February 24, 1997 *News* profiled the first comedy event fundraiser for the MSC, a combination dinner and elimination draw. That event has evolved into the annual Food & Farce for Adult Basic Literacy. First held on February 19, 2000 in The Lions Auditorium, the next, our 10th, will be held on Feb. 21, 2009, once again in the Auditorium.

It is not all big events and big donors, however. Bill Clinton in his book **Giving** stresses the importance of a base of small donors. The research done in Canada by Imagine (an organization devoted to the charitable and volunteer sectors), and in the US by the Centre for Philanthropy in Indiana, supports this point. One of the hallmarks of the MSC is the healthy mix between 'small' and 'large' donors – many people buy MSC raffle tickets and the annual donor campaigns for Adult Basic Literacy and Home Support receive donations in the \$10.00 to \$5,000.00 range. As is the case with volunteering, people do what they can.

The most recent MSC donor photo in the *News* (July 9, 2008) shows Margot Staley receiving her raffle winnings from organizer Karen Devolin. And, in late October, the MSC received its most recent donation, a \$10.00 gift, given in memory of another individual's passing, from an individual who has supported the MSC with many small donations over the years. Like Margot, this person supports MSC community work in the best way he can.

The MSC remains very grateful to all the donors (and the volunteers and staff who facilitate MSC fundraising), for providing the foundational basis that helps us reach our promise of making "services FOR the community IN the community".

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