

Cassellholme residents find freedom on bus



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Clemmie Blyth rolled up in her wheelchair Tuesday morning to personally thank the four men who gave her the freedom she lost a few years ago when she moved into Cassellholme Home for the Aged.

“Thank you. It means so much to us to be able to get out, you have no idea,” Blyth told Eric Thomson, one of the donors who helped contribute \$60,000 to purchase a bus for Cassellholme.

Blyth who is 98-years-old loved to drive her car and the independence that came along with it.

She now relies on volunteers and family to take her outside the confines of the long-term care home.

“I’m ready to go anywhere at anytime,” she said, noting that she wore her sweater in case there was an opportunity to go for a ride today.

“Getting out in the public is a wonderful feeling, it makes you forget all of your troubles.”

Thanks to Thomson Financial Partners – Ted Thomson, Rob Fry, Chris Winrow and Eric Thomson, Cassellholme residents and community partners such as members of the PADDLE program, are now able to hop on a bus and enjoy an array of activities such as the fall colour and Christmas lights tours and longer visits at the mall.

The bus can accommodate up to 11 passengers or can be configured to accommodate eight wheelchairs.

Jamie Lowery, chief executive officer at Cassellholme, said loneliness and isolation is the number one killer in seniors.

He said for many residents their family has moved away and they don’t have anyone to take them outside.

“They’ve got to maintain a sense of community and that connection that comes along with it. We will be planning excursions, things that many of us take for granted.”

Lowery said this donation is a big deal for seniors.

He said social interaction and reconnecting with the community keeps people out of the emergency room and provides seniors with a stronger sense of belonging.

Coun. Chris Mayne said he’s thankful for community partners like Thomson Financial Partners who contribute.

“The province never seems to have the money to bring these important projects forward.”

It was when Mayne mentioned trips to bingo, possible Casino Rama in Orillia, that got some residents super excited for the possibilities this bus could provide.

Francine Therrien, president of resident council, said since the news broke about Cassellholme acquiring a bus residents have been anxious to get on it.

She said one of the first priorities will be for those who don’t have family and haven’t been out to get the opportunity to do so.

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