

King Fire, Lions go above and beyond with Guide Light program

By Mark Pavilons

A close-knit community looks after its own.

That sentiment is behind a new pilot project initiated by King Fire and Emergency Services. The Guide Light program aims to ensure that every senior, living independently in their own home, is taken care of.

This goes beyond the mandate of your typical fire department, but it's just another value added service in this special municipality. During regular home visits by fire services personnel, ensuring residents have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, they're now offering the Guide Light. This simple, intelligent light bulb, complete with its own remote, brings help right to your door. In fact, it's been proven to save lives. Each bulb is synchronized to the remote.

You simply replace your existing exterior light bulb with the Guide Light. In the event of an emergency, it flashes red, alerting first responders and neighbours of trouble. The light can be seen upwards of three to five kilometres away!

Day or night, emergency personnel can find you much faster.

And when seconds count, it can mean the difference between life and death.

Tony Nowzari, president and founder of Safety Aid, said it's ideal for neighbours as well, who often tend to be on the lookout for the well-being of others in their community. There have been instances when neighbours have come to the aid of Guide Light users.

Wall said they are beginning to track the addresses where the light is being installed and this feature will enhance the 911 system.

The response, even at this early stage, has been "fantastic," Wall said, adding they've been receiving calls about it. Residents seem surprised that fire services are offering such an innovative gizmo for free.

The program has taken off thanks to the support from Nowzari and local Lions Clubs (Schomberg, Nobleton, King City). Nowzari donated 150 of the lights for free to get started.

Chief Wall first introduced the light to the Schomberg Lions Club at last fall's appreciation dinner and members felt this would be worth pursuing.

They then met with the Nobleton Lions Club and the King City Lions Club who agreed that partnering with fire services to promote and distribute the Guide Light would be their "Centennial Legacy Project," in honour of the founding of the Lions 100 years ago.

"They believe in it," Wall pointed out, adding the Lions Clubs are footing the bill for the program.

"I want our seniors to be looked after."

It's this type of partnership that makes King, and its Fire and Emergency Services, one of the most respected in all of Ontario.

Wall hopes to have the Guide Lights up and running in all three villages before too long. After that, he hopes to expand the program to rural areas.

He admitted that some households, given the design of their front entrances, may not be well suited for the light.

Nowzari is quick to point out that he's dealt with several fire chiefs and Chief Wall has been most receptive. Wall wears his heart on his sleeve regarding the love he has for his community.

Nowzari added the product has been in Canada just over a year now. He began his company after his father-in-law suffered a heart attack in a metropolitan community, and emergency crews had trouble finding the home in bad weather.

He came across many cases in his research where the Guide Light would have made a big difference.

Nowzari also donates a portion of his sales to first responders and seniors' organizations.

While Chief Wall promotes the Guide Light, he said there is an educational message that goes along with this. Every home should have a visible number or address, so responders can find your home easily. At some of the homes firefighters visit, they discover hidden or missing house numbers. They help homeowners improve this.

If you would like one of these lights, contact the King Fire & Emergency Services at 905-833-2800.

For more on the product itself, contact Nowzari at 416-749-6660 or Tony@safetyaid.com