

Dino Live offers prehistoric fun over holiday weekend



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Faraday Community Centre had its very own Jurassic Park over the long holiday weekend, as the not-for-profit Indian River Reptile Sanctuary also known as Canada's Dinosaur Park, brought its displays to the area on Oct. 12 and 13. The event also supported North Hastings Community Cupboard's emergency food relief efforts. Monica Piercey, NHCC director, and Edward Loyst, who is on the board of directors of Canada's Dinosaur Park, comment on this fun and exciting event for the whole family. Piercey told Bancroft This Week on Oct. 11 that they were thrilled to have Indian River Reptile Sanctuary coming to the area with their dinosaurs. "I think locals will be treated to something really special on this holiday weekend. The Cupboard is fortunate to be chosen as the local charity the Sanctuary is assisting by offering discounted entry with non-perishable food donations. Being that we are celebrating Thanksgiving this weekend we can all take some moments to reflect on what we are thankful for while enjoying this event and supporting both the Sanctuary and the Cupboard's emergency food relief efforts simultaneously," she says. Piercey said that the Cupboard is entering into their busiest season and the pressure is on to address a growing number of those experiencing food insecurity. She says that while an increase in need is being seen across all demographics, they are concerned at the growing numbers of seniors needing food bank and prepared meal services. "Costs of living are constantly increasing and people simply cannot afford to buy food in the way they once were. The Cupboard is also anticipating a growing need for Holiday Hampers again this year. Last year we provided about 190 holiday hampers (including specialized packages for the unhoused) and a full turkey and ham holiday dinner with all the fixings," she says. Piercey said that if anyone is interested in volunteering with them through the holiday season to prepare hampers and serve meals, along with warehouse duties and food drives during this busy season, now is the time to contact them. "The Cupboard will also be working with the Town of Bancroft to provide breakfast kits to those accessing the warming room from December to March [2025] and a volunteer would be helpful with that program as well. We are also seeking board members. A volunteer application form can be downloaded on our website at www.northhastingscommunitycupboard.com/volunteer/," she says. Loyst says that Indian River Reptile Sanctuary closes for the season at the end of September but during the off-season from October to May, they send their dinosaurs out to generate revenue to support their reptile sanctuary and cooperate with local not for profit organizations like NHCC. "Live animals never leave their home at the sanctuary only replica dinosaurs travel. The selection of dinosaurs for a pop-up exhibit in smaller communities consists of 12 to 15 dinosaurs of various sizes. Some are animatronic with sound and movement others are stationary. The assortment includes popular dinosaurs like Tyrannosaurus rex, stegosaurus, raptors etc. It is an educational and fun experience for all ages and a discount

on the ticket price is provided for anyone bringing a food donation, preferably canned goods to the event, he says. On Oct. 12, families in attendance at the Faraday community centre were all having a blast as they took in the exhibit. Melinda Baker, curator at Canada's Dinosaur Park and Gina were at the door collecting the admission fee and the canned goods for NHCC and Baker thought the attendance was overwhelming. "We've had a lineup since we opened at 10 a.m. We haven't had a chance to breathe yet. We're very please with the turnout. It's been really good," she says. Christina was there with her daughter Evelyn and says they've been going to the park since Evelyn was three years old. "We were actually sad because we couldn't get there this year. So, the fact that they came and actually brought these was awesome. It goes to a good cause. I have no problem paying \$10 and they had the really cool bag (that people got at the door with the price of admission). I was hoping they were going to bring the bigger ones but that's a lot of transportation and they have a lot that move. The park is beautiful, so I was really happy when I saw that this was coming here," she says. "It's like, alright, let's go and do it!"