

## Maynooth Business Association engages families



Sophie and Thomas hunt for Easter eggs at the ANAF barn. Photo by Sarah Vance

### By Sarah Vance

The Easter Bunny can be elusive, but some say they saw him hopping through the Highlands over the weekend.

As the clock struck 1:30 p.m. children and their parents eagerly gathered in the Army, Navy and Air Force Barn on Saturday, March 26 for Maynooth's annual Easter Egg hunt. Hundreds of candy eggs colored the fields of the ball diamond, as families from surrounding communities such as Lake St. Peter and Bancroft attended the event, a partnership between the Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association and the ANAF.

'Facebook has been a dynamic tool for spreading the word,' said Carla Van Balen Walter, who organizes the celebration with a committee of local volunteers. 'There are a lot of families from Bancroft and surrounding communities today.'

In the moments before the hunt, children were grouped into age categories. The youngest in the pack were given a head-start, while older kids waited for the signal from Alok Van Balen Walter. The impact of Thursday's ice storm created a perfect canvas for the hunt, with a crisp layer of ice making for easy snow travel.

'We have been coming here for at least four years,' said Sukhan Bains, who brought his children and grandparents from Birds Creek. 'It is a family tradition.'

As the signal was given, children darted into the fields with seasonally decorated baskets, scooping eggs off the icy surface that supported their weight.

'Tristan Scott stuffed the plastic egg containers with candy and taped them up for the hunters,' said Carla, who recycles the containers every year. 'We do not know exactly how many candies are on the field.'

The annual Easter egg hunt is just one of the Business Association's events aimed at engaging local families.

Inside the Barn, Tracy Hagar and Christine Hass, who have organized teams of volunteers and hosted many fundraising dinners over the past year, presented a cheque for the amount of \$1000, to be held in trust for children's activities over Labour Day weekend.

In the past, these have included special guests such as the popular Balloon Man as well as activities like face painting. Snacks have been served and tea parties have been hosted, each strengthening community engagement and drawing tourists to the area. Intergenerational activities, like the annual egg hunt, contribute to Maynooth's welcoming atmosphere and demonstrate a commitment for putting families first.

Financial contributions keep the magic alive for local children.

Maynooth's Business Association, founded in 1989 and incorporated in 1992, relies on community investment to make a difference.