

AT YOUR SERVICE

War Amps works great in many ways, local amputee proclaims

BY SCOTT HAYES

Staff Writer

Everyone either knows or should know about the keytag service provided by the War Amps. For 75 years, people have been putting these tags (each with its own unique registration number) on their keychains as an added level of insurance. Just in case their keys ever go missing, the keychain can simply be dropped in the mailbox and the keys will find their way back to the owner for free. There's a toll-free number on the back of the tag for its finder to call, too.

The service was launched in 1946 so returning war amputee veterans could work for competitive wages and provide a community service that would raise funds for the association and its many programs. It continues to employ amputees and people with disabilities.

In all those years, it has facilitated the return of more than 1.5 million sets of lost keys to their owners.

Now at the end of its diamond jubilee year, the keytag service and War Amps itself is being heralded for its life-enriching work by St. Albert teen Reid Maxwell. Born a right-leg amputee, he was eligible for financial assistance for artificial limbs and adaptive devices, as well as peer support as a member of the War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program.

"The War Amps support means that I've been fitted with artificial legs that provide me with mobility and the ability to participate in many different activities, such as running and swimming," he said, adding that he also gets to go to CHAMP events where he meets new people and makes new friends.

"We'd like to thank the public for helping to make this service a success," said War Amps spokesperson and CHAMP grad Rob Larman. "Your support funds essential programs for all amputees across Canada, including children and veterans."

People can visit waramps.ca or call toll-free 1-800-250-3030 to learn more or to order key tags.

Soap box race organizers ramp up

Forget how the Soap Box Derby was in 2020 and 2021. Rather, think ahead to the glory of gravity-powered racing to come on Father's Day in 2022.

As the city's premiere soap box event gears up for what promises to be a rip-roaring time, its organizers are offering some early and added incentives, courtesy of the event's presenter.

Todd and Liz Lesenko at Fountain Tire are adding a limited number of rental carts to allow more kids the opportunity to participate. The shop is also set to host two technical and build sessions in February and April. Participants aged six to 12 must operate carts built using a GoKit. New kits are \$90 at Todd's Fountain Tire at 780-459-6716. They can also be ordered directly from GoKits at a current cost of \$103.75.

Visit stalbertsoapboxderby.ca for more information.

Food bank catchup

Many collections take place for the St. Albert Food Bank throughout the year and a couple of big ones have happened recently.

On Dec. 4, the second annual Jingle Labelle's Food



WAR AMPS/Supplied

St. Albert's Reid Maxwell at a War Amps CHAMP Seminar in 2011 (left) and today. War Amps has helped the right-leg amputee for almost his entire life.

Drive occurred on Labelle Crescent with five neighbourly couples — equating to 10 "elves" (sic) who dressed up and carted their wheelbarrows around the block to 58 houses. Altogether, the crew amassed 305 kilograms of food and more than \$1,200.

"We collected more this year than last year," offered spokes-elf Ruth Moellenbeck. "It is amazing ... best crescent in St. Albert."

Topping off that stellar effort was the power play by the Raiders U16 AA hockey team, which brought in a collection of 1,287 kilograms of food, offered head coach John Haney — the result of a food drive at one game early in the month coupled with a door-to-door collection the teammates undertook last weekend.

"A previous couple of seasons ago, we had set a total just around 1,900 pounds. That was a pretty good record at the time, but we wanted to best that and see what we could do this year. Clearly, everybody did fantastic despite even the COVID challenges. We were really impressed with the players and families to make this happen," he enthused.

"The happy part for me is that we've been successful on the ice; we're running a 14-and-2 record in the regular season. We're doing first place stuff on and off the ice."

St. Albert Rotaract and Interact Clubs joined their elder compatriots with the St. Albert Rotary Club to build and distribute the food bank's Christmas hampers on Dec. 22.

Their hard work was rewarded externally by a pizza lunch courtesy of Chambers Plumbing and Heating, along with the internal sense of heartwarming goodwill they all must have experienced.

And speaking of Rotary ...

The Sturgeon Community Hospital Foundation publicly thanked the Rotary Club of St. Albert for sending 1,000 Hospital Heroes gratitude cards with homemade hearts enclosed.

sbayer@stalbert.greatwest.ca