

# 'Nice guy' receives recognition

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Jack Prazeres realizes he has enjoyed a blessed life.



**Jack Prazeres**

The married, father of two has experienced both personal and professional success over the years. And, when he found himself in a position to give back, he did so wholeheartedly.

For his volunteer efforts, Prazeres was honoured last night at Community Living Mississauga's (CLM) 27th Annual Tribute Dinner. Proceeds raised from the evening, which was held at the Mississauga Convention Centre, will allow almost 250 youth with intellectual disabilities to attend a variety of summer camp programs.

Prazeres, who has served as chair of Carassauga and president of the Portuguese Cultural Centre of Mississauga, said giving back to the community through volunteerism was of great importance to him.

"I was in a position where I could help and I thought it was very important to get involved," said Prazeres, 48. "We live in a country with so many different cultures living together in harmony, I wanted to be a part of it through Carassauga. With the disabled, there was such a big need to help. I've done well and I'm in a position to help make a difference."

Prazeres, a Streetsville resident,

is heavily involved with community organizations such as the Luso Canadian Charitable Society and Portuguese Support Services for Quality Living. He has also fundraised with Peel Regional Police for the Children's Diabetes Foundation and Victim Services of Peel.

Being selected as the guest of honour for the tribute dinner was a welcome surprise.

"It's a great feeling and there's no words to describe it," said Prazeres, who was born in Portugal and came to Canada at the age of 12. "To be picked out of a big city like this is an honour. And, knowing that 250 special needs kids will go to camp through this makes me very proud."

Doug Fowles, chair of the CLM Tribute Dinner Planning Committee, said Prazeres was an easy choice for the honour.

"With Jack, his work with Carassauga and other charities really stood out," said Fowles. "Plus, he's just a really nice guy with a great reputation. He's respected in his own community but also in the wider community as well."

As a tribute to Prazeres' heritage, the evening opened with traditional Portuguese music and dancers. Dinner was a selection of Portuguese cuisine.

Over the past 26 years, the CLM tribute dinner has raised more than \$1.2 million. Proceeds enable children and teens who have an intellectual disability to participate in summer camp programs.

Founded in 1955, CLM is a non-profit organization that provides support to more than 1,700 people who have an intellectual disability, and their families.