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Durham business presents gift to university.

Contribution to endowment fund increases annual award.

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By Crystal Crimi

Jeff Goldman, of Durham Custom Homes, donates $25,000 to the University of Ontario Institution of Technology to go toward an endowment fund.

DURHAM - In a home done up in festive decor, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology accepted an early holiday gift.

Amongst the wrapped boxes underneath a Christmas tree, stockings hung by the fireplace and tables featuring holiday centrepieces, dozens of people gathered inside a Durham Custom Home for a special lunch to celebrate and present a $25,000 cheque to the UOIT.

"This will be a continued contribution to the university and to the endowment," said Jeff Goldman, principal of Durham Custom Homes.

The money will add to the Nathan and Marvin Goldman/Durham Homes Student Fund, raising the amount in the fund to $250,000.

Mr. Goldman's father Nathan, and uncle Marvin, began the endowment in 2006, out of their excitement for the new university and desire to help further energy developments related to construction. At the time, they donated $100,000, which was matched by the Province.

"We basically decided what we wanted to do was add to that fund," Mr. Goldman said, adding it was in honour of his father and uncle and to give back to the community.

The newly added money will bring the amount dispersed by the endowment annually from $8,000 to about $10,000, he said. The award's recipient is an undergraduate engineering student at UOIT with a focus on greener construction technologies and in need of financial aid.

"We benefit from each other," Mr. Goldman said.

The company his father and uncle created began in 1950 and has always been based in Durham, although it builds throughout Ontario.

"This has been a checkered year for us in many ways," Mr. Goldman said to his guests, including family members, architects, local politicians and members of the home builders' association.

The economy has made the last 12 months a challenge, although things are starting to look up now, but they've also received many awards and recognition, such as being named Green Builder of the Year by the Ontario Home Builders Association in September.

On a personal note, Mr. Goldman wasn't able to be here last year because he was in the U.S. pursing medical treatment for his younger daughter who is now recovered, he said. His father was also in the hospital, but is now medically stable and at home with support.

"Something upstairs has been looking out for him, for us," he said, adding he wanted to take a moment to say thanks to everyone who's supported them.

"It strikes me listening to you speak, we are really in a home," said MaryLynn West-Moynes, UOIT's vice-president of external relations.

Giving a student a leg up in attending university helps keep Durham a place for families, Ms. West-Moynes said.

"To our family at the university to this family, we thank you," she added.