

100 Women Who Care gives to Girls Can Too Program



By Jasen Obermeyer

The Girls Can Too Program in Caledon will soon be benefiting from the efforts of the 100 Women Who Care Caledon.

The women gathered for their first meeting of the year last Thursday (Feb. 1) at the Caledon Ski Club, and raised a total of \$7,900.

Participants were able to nominate an organization ahead of time, with three randomly drawn. Each participant pledged \$100 to contribute. The nominators were given five minutes to make their pitch to those in attendance.

Sandra Sharpe spoke on behalf of Girls Can Too.

She explained that the program is offered by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and provides young women from grades 7 to 12 with hands-on learning experiences in construction and ecology. They offer either one- or two-week programs in the summer and though they don't turn down anyone, what limits their size is the amount of funding.

Ms. Sharpe said the program simply encourages girls to go into a skilled trade, as some girls may choose to go into a different career. "It certainly gives them the confidence to be able to have the possibility to choose any career."

She shared how when she was in Grade 12, she took shop class, but didn't have anyone to look up to or go through the class with, as she was the only girl. "My daughter did take shop, where there were many other girls in the program. Even though you may not go into these kinds of trades in the future, they open doors."

The money raised will allow the program to purchase the supplies and materials needed for the participants this summer.

The other nominees were Wellspring Cancer and Caledon Parent-Child Centre (CPCC).

Gail Dickson spoke on behalf of Wellspring, which is a network of community-based support centres offering programs and services that meet the emotional, social, practical and restorative needs of people living with cancer and those who care for them. The programs are offered free of charge.

"It's a safe, confidential place to meet others living with cancer, to learn coping strategies, knowledge, and share with others living with cancer at any stage in their life," explained Ms. Dickson.

She said they don't receive funding from the government, and rely on donations from individuals, corporate sponsorships, and fundraising events.

Ms. Dickson said everyone has known someone who has been touched by cancer, which is where Wellspring comes in to provide love and care. "Hospitals are stressed, and maxed out, and they can't provide what people need."

Sherolyn Roman spoke for CPCC, which is a non-profit community service organization that provides quality programs for children, parents and caregivers in Caledon and the surrounding areas.

She said the challenge they face is meeting the needs of diverse families in urban and rural areas.

"Caledon is a huge geographic area, with a variety of families that come in all shapes and sizes, and we endeavour to serve them all," said Ms. Roman. "For us, fundraising typically doesn't come in huge corporation sponsors and dollars."