

DCAFS doing its part to Build Better Tomorrows in Dufferin County



By Mike Pickford

‘Less is more, but none is best.’

A peculiar sentence if simply said out loud, but for approximately 160 area residents that particular phrase really hit home as Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS) hosted its Building Better Tomorrows luncheon fundraiser.

The event, says DCAFS Executive Director Jennifer Moore, was designed to impress on people the importance of collaboration and mindfulness when working in the community. ‘People need to step outside of their silos, leave their egos at the door and work in a positive fashion,’ Ms. Moore said.

With that in mind, the local non-profit invited Michael ‘Pinball’ Clemons, renowned for his time spent with the Canadian Football League's Toronto Argonauts, to act as guest speaker. For those who have not had the opportunity to listen to Mr. Clemons, to say he is a passionate speaker would be an understatement. He touched on numerous important issues, often going into detail on his own personal experiences growing up in the small city of Dunedin, Florida.

He held the room in the palm of his hands as he shared his journey from being a small, undersized 8-year-old boy, ridiculed by others for taking to the football field, to becoming one of the greatest Toronto Argonaut players in recent memory. Not that you'd know that last fact. You see, Mr. Clemons checked his ego at the door long ago. Determined only to do good work in the communities he visits.

‘Michael was an absolutely amazing speaker. He really personified everything we wanted to communicate in the one hour he spent speaking,’ Ms. Moore said.

While final fundraising numbers won't be available until next week, Ms. Moore says she already considers the event a rousing success with an event-first vendors market proving a hit amongst those in attendance. In total, DCAFS is hoping to be able to announce a final figure of \$20,000, all of which would go towards its Dufferin Children's Fund.

Made up of three key components, the Dufferin Children's Fund spends in the region of \$50,000 helping youth across the county. Focusing on youth futures, health and wellness and social growth and development, grants are often handed out to help youth enrol in post-secondary education, receive help with medical costs not covered by OHIP and enjoy day trips and camp visits in the summer months.

‘The Dufferin Children's Fund has been in existence now for around 20 years. It's been in existence long enough that we're seeing some real benefits and success stories come from the program,’ Ms. Moore said. ‘We're starting to see how cycles can be broken and that there can be good outcomes for young people who haven't necessarily had an easy life.’

In conclusion, Ms. Moore thanked the community for their ongoing support.

‘We are absolutely thrilled with the amount of support we've received again this year. We had 160 people at the event, a higher number of sponsorships, it just brings great joy to see how much our community stands behind us,’ Ms. Moore said. ‘Each of us really has an opportunity to make an impact in other people's lives, however big or small, and I think we've proven that through this fundraiser. It was a tremendous event that is going to bring tremendous benefits to lots of youth in Dufferin County.’

For more information on Dufferin Child and Family Services and the Dufferin Children's Fund, visit dcafs.on.ca.