

100 Women Who Care launches Dufferin chapter

By Jasen Obermeyer

The 100 Women Who Care organization has a new chapter in Dufferin, and its first meeting was a huge success, with the Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS) being the first recipient of the group's donations.

Founders of the chapter are Sarah Aston, Brenda Seltzer, Liz Skorski, and Lori-Jane Del Medico. Ms. Aston explained to the Citizen how she co-founded the organization after she was at the Caledon 100 Women chapter last year when presenting for a charity. "I was so blown away by the process."

Participants were able to nominate an organization ahead of time, with three randomly drawn, each nominator given five minutes to pitch to those in attendance.

The Dufferin chapter already has around 115 members, and 126 women gathered at the Hockley Valley Resort this past Monday (May 28). "It's so powerful and so efficient," said Ms. Aston. In one hour, the women raised \$12,600 for DCAFS' Dufferin Children's Fund.

"It surpassed our dreams," she added.

Jennifer Moore, Executive Director for DCAFS, spoke for the organization, which is a multi-service agency providing 20 different programs under three areas; child, youth and mental health, child protection, and developmental support services.

"We serve children, youth and their families, as well as adults requiring support due to a developmental disability," she told the audience.

Some of the programs and services they provide are the Ontario autism program under 9, special needs resourcing for kids under 12, crisis counseling, therapeutic support, and an LGBTQ group. "We serve about 3,000 people in Dufferin per year from all walks of life," said Ms. Moore. "We believe that people do well when they can."

She explained that although they are fortunate to receive funding for their core services, "we knew that we needed to provide more to the community in order to help young people reach their full potential." With that came the creation of the organization's fundraising arm, the Dufferin Children's Fund.

Ms. Moore added that all the money raised goes directly back into the community, which in the past six years has raised over \$340,000 for nearly 300 Dufferin residents, and supports around 60 kids per year for summer camp, and many eventually go into post-secondary education. "The money that people like you have donated has been very much appreciated, but even more importantly, led to some incredible outcomes."

The other nominees were Bravery Park, and the Orangeville district branch of the Ontario SPCA. There will be two other meetings later in the year.