

FTPs Rural Response Program available for women in crisis

Family Transition Place (FTP) has received a two-year grant from the Ministry of Community and Social Services' Violence Against Women ? Rural Realities Fund.

The Rural Response Program gives FTP the opportunity to ?break down barriers to service for women who have experienced or are experiencing abuse in their relationships and reside in the rural areas of Dufferin-Caledon, by being more mobile and accessible,? says Rural Response Councillor Samantha McCabe.

The goal of the Rural Response Program is to alleviate obstacles for women in crisis living in rural areas of Dufferin County. Obstacles that prevent access to help such as transportation, isolation, child care, and access to after-hours service. The program will develop a ?crisis response strategy for responding to rural needs,? while increasing cooperation with existing services, says Ms. McCabe.

The program will be based out of the Mel Lloyd Centre in Shelburne and will provide for up to six counselling sessions for rural women in crisis in Dufferin. Clients will receive abuse education, safety planning, and appropriate community referrals.

?What makes this initiative particularly exciting,? says Ms. McCabe, ?is the opportunity to be mobile, allowing the Rural Response Counsellor to meet with women in the community. We have also been given the opportunity to use technology to our advantage allowing us to communicate with clients differently in order to eliminate barriers.?

Ms. McCabe said FTP ?is very fortunate? to have received the grant for the new initiative and looks to organizations and community members for meaningful relationships to help sustain the program.

?There must be an investment from the community for the program to continue,? she added, saying Family Transition Place hoped to ?build upon existing partnerships in order to build healthier communities one relationship at a time.?

She said women in rural communities ?face additional barriers to accessing services such as, lack of transportation, child care, fear of retaliation, and the unique challenges of residing in a small town.? The Rural Response Program will be able to deliver community education, immediate support and short term counselling to those residing in the area of Shelburne, Grand Valley and North Dufferin ? supporting women ?as close to their home as possible.?

Men or couples who request further support will be connected with Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin. For more information about the Rural Response Program and its services call 519- 941-HELP (4357).

Anyone who feels that they could directly benefit from this service please contact Ms. McCabe at 519-939-3423.