

100 Women gives \$7,600 to Caledon-Dufferin Victim Services

Written By JASEN OBERMEYER

Caledon's 100 Women Who Care chapter will be donating to the Caledon-Dufferin Victim Services.

The women gathered at the Caledon Ski Club last Thursday (May 10), and successfully raised \$7600. 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.

Christine Gnass spoke on behalf of Caledon-Dufferin Victim Services (CDVS), and stated that she herself is not a victim, but did share a story to explain why she chose this organization.

She told the women gathered that her car was a target of 'things' of sexual nature, and was told to take a women's self-defense course. She went to a non-profit organization in downtown Toronto, and noticed the behavior of one of the woman was different, and knew something had happened to her.

'I could see her tearing up,' Ms. Gnass said. The woman revealed to the group that she was raped.

She said that although she's never been through that experience, 'I know it's out there, it's prominent.'

Ms. Gnass said CDVS provides immediate support, and only has three full-time staff members, and is constantly lacking money, despite government funding. 'Often times women don't know that these resources are there.'

She said the organization provides medical care, counseling, and legal advice. 'Citizens from all walks of life come forward to volunteer as crisis responders,' she said. 'A task that would verge on the impossible, if it were not for the generosity of our community members.'

Ms. Gnass reiterated that although Caledon is a safe area, anyone can be a victim. 'Your life can change in a moment, your dreams can be shattered in an instant.'

She added that last year, volunteers responded to almost 2,000 service requests. 'Together, they supported victims of abuse, violence, and tragic circumstances.'

The other nominations were Habitat for Humanity, and Orangeville SPCA.

Heather Kendall spoke for Habitat, saying that Caledon recently received their first-ever HFH building, which has 10-three- and four-bedroom townhouses. 'Their mission is to mobilize volunteers as well as community partners to help hard working, low income families break the cycle of poverty through affordable home ownership.'

She explained that high real estate prices and 'severe affordable housing shortages' in the GTA cause over 30 per cent of an income to be used on rent. 'These desperate renters are forced to live in unhealthy, unsafe, or crowded living spaces.'

Ms. Kendall added that this impacts their children's sense of security and belonging, as families are constantly on the move.

Lisa McCrea spoke for the OSPCA, which provides leadership for the prevention against cruelty to animals and promote animal welfare.

She said that in 2016, the centre adopted 8,307 animals, and money needed is to cover the shelter and animal cost, humane education, and medical bills. 'They don't receive any government funding at all, so they're dependent on donations.'