

?A door to change? a true Victory for women in need

By Jessica Laurenza

Three years ago while at church, Pat Valliere began thinking deeply about how to help local women who have been in difficult situations improve their lives. From this internal yearn to help, she founded Victory House and Victory Lap Emporium, whose slogan is ?a door to change.?

Valliere opened Victory Lap Emporium on March 9 at the north-west corner of Caledon Village, a high-end, second-hand store where 100% of the proceeds fund food and supplies for Victory House.

They sell gently used household items, women's clothing and accessories, books, home décor and artwork. The store is staffed by local volunteers and they're open from 10 am ? 4 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Victory House is an organization offering temporary shelter for women and children throughout the Dufferin-Caledon region.

Caledon Hills Fellowship Baptist Church on Airport Road offered Valliere a building at the back of their property for her to help these women, which will be known as Victory House.

?Most people have a heart for charity but they want to know where their money is going and they can really see it this way,? explains Valliere.

This is exemplified in the overwhelming amount of donations they had at the store, as well as the donations given to help fund the construction and renovations of Victory House.

She says she is blown away by the generosity and support from the local community in helping make this charitable dream a reality.

She recently received the permits to start construction on a two-bedroom apartment in the downstairs area and will start renovations on the main building once the apartment is complete.

Habitat for Humanity's volunteers are working in conjunction with Victory House volunteers to begin construction on the house.

Everything for the house has been donated. Notably, Palgrave's Rotary Club donated money for the kitchen and St. John's church in Nobleton donated money for the living room furniture.

?I love it because this has become part of a community. That's the whole purpose of Victory House being where it is ? to get the community involved with the construction so hopefully they'll stay [with us] and help the women who are there,? Valliere says.

Victory House will work in conjunction with Family Transition Place in Orangeville (an emergency shelter), acting as a secondary spot for women who need additional support and care following their time at Family Transition Place. The house will hold 4-6 women to ensure the ?rest, support, counselling and love? they need.

Through speaking with other transition homes, she realized some women had never cooked or even sat at a dinner table.

?You just don't think that this happens here. It's sad,? she says.

That's why Victory House will provide volunteers during meal times to help women if they need support while cooking.

Currently, Valliere has a team of about 60 volunteers but she is looking for more volunteers to staff the Emporium, as well as two or

three Board Members to aid with Victory House developments.

You can call the store at 416-456-3560 to connect directly with Pat to receive additional information about volunteering.