

CCS gets funds from feds for LIFE for Youth



Cape Breton Canso MP Roger Cuzner, Parliamentary secretary to Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Minister Patty Hajdu, was in town to announce close to \$1.5 million in funding for Caledon Community Services (CCS)'s LIFE for Youth project. He is seen here with CCS's Director of Employment and Development Cathy Perennec McLean, Office and Facilities Co-ordinator and LIFE for Youth graduate Kenia Garcia, Vaughan-Woodbridge MP Francesco Sorbara, Caledon Community Services CEO Monty Laskin, Mayor Allan Thompson and Councillor Johanna Downey, who sits on the CCS Board.

By Bill Rea

Providing good training and experience for young people has many spin-off benefits, including to the economy.

That was one of the main points made Monday when Cape Breton Canso MP Roger Cuzner was in town to announce close to \$1.5 million in funding for Caledon Community Services (CCS)'s LIFE for Youth project.

Cuzner, Parliamentary secretary to Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Minister Patty Hajdu, announced the government will provide funding to help 128 young people who need it most to overcome barriers to getting a job or returning to school.

Through the LIFE for Youth project, youth will attend workshops that are tailored to their needs. These include sessions on job searching and networking, time management, communication skills, conflict resolution, stress management and health and safety certification. They will also get valuable work experience in sectors like retail, food services, construction and manufacturing.

The announcement was made at CCS's Evolve store, which CEO Monty Laskin called "Caledon's hottest clothing retail destination."

Laskin commented on the need for young people to be able to get some real-world work experience in order to get ahead. By matching the youth with local employers, he pointed out that also helps the local economy.

In making the announcement, Cuzner commented that the program means a lot to Hajdu.

"This is a pretty neat announcement," he added, pointing out the program is important in getting young people practical experience to help them get into the job market.

The government put out calls for applications for federal funding, and some 900 agencies across the country applied. He also said the application from CCS stood out above many of them.

"Kudos to the organization," he declared, adding the funding for the program will bring long-term benefit to the community.

Cuzner said the federal government can be of considerable help when it works with communities, allowing the local authorities to establish what is needed, and coming up with local solutions, while the government partners and supports.

He also pointed out there have been a lot of stories about young people being unable to get jobs because they lack experience.

Helping to get them into the workforce builds confidence.

"This will help benefit 128 young people in this community," he said.

"It takes a village," he added. "We're very happy that the government of Canada's been able to help this village."

"The LIFE for Youth project will give Bolton's young people the chance to develop their skills and gain work experience," Cuzner observed. "Setting youth up for success is part of our government's plan to create long-term economic growth."

The government announced in the 2017 budget that \$400 million would be set aside for youth employment initiatives, and that includes helping some 33,000 vulnerable youth all over the country. He also said the government has doubled the number of summer jobs available this year.

CCS's Director of Employment and Development Cathy Perennec McLean said the LIFE for Youth program has completed its 10th cycle. She added 240 youths have been served in the program, with a success rate of 73 per cent.

?We're grateful for this multi-year investment that the government of Canada is making in our community's youth,? Laskin remarked. ?LIFE for Youth has a tremendous track record, largely due to the time and attention given to these young people by Caledon Community Services staff and local employers. We're all working towards the same thing ? a bright future in today's labour market for youth to overcome barriers through expert training and coaching.?