

## CCS opens the new Evolve store in Bolton

By Bill Rea

Caledon Community Services (CCS) has a long history in town, and another major chapter was opened Friday.

Evolve is now officially open for business at its new location on Industrial Road in Bolton, with about 8,5000 square feet of retail floor area.

Crowds were waiting first thing Friday morning to get in and start seeking bargains at the clothing store. It replaces Chez Thrift, which has served the community and agency since 1982.

“There is a lot of gratitude I want to express on behalf of Caledon Community Services,” Monty Laskin, CEO of the agency declared.

He pointed out Chez Thrift was an institution in the community for many years, but it was time to move to something bigger.

Laskin also expressed thanks to the CCS Board, chaired by Carine Strong. He said this group of community volunteers were asked to be visionary. Chez Thrift, he said, had more clothes in bags than they were able to get on the floor.

He said they put together a plan to take before the board. “You need to be ahead of the wave,” he said he urged them, and they urged him to see what he could do and come up with a viable business plan.

“Thank you for the faith you showed,” Laskin said to the board.

He was also appreciative to the Town of Caledon for the help in getting the necessary approvals in place. He also had lots of praise for Councillor Johanna Downey, who sits on the CCS board, and “single handedly” did what she could to open doors.

“Joanna has worked tirelessly,” he remarked.

Laskin also paid tribute to Luella Parks, owner of the building (her husband Donald passed away a year ago).

“She was a tough negotiator; a very tough negotiator,” he said, “and I was a very tough negotiator.”

“She’s a fabulous landlord,” he added.

Others who assisted with the development of the project came in for thanks, including contractor Ira Idzkowski of Torcon Ltd.

“It’s been a year of lots and lots of frustration,” Laskin said, adding Idzkowski kept telling him, “Just leave it with me.”

“Ira has been exceptional,” he added.

The retail operation will be taking up most of the main floor of the building, but Laskin said there are plans for the second floor. He said there will be a training centre there to support people who need help getting employment skills. He said they are looking for a federal grant to assist in that regard.

As well, Laskin paid tribute to the many volunteers on which the agency depends, as he said hundreds of hours have been put in to sorting, cleaning and hanging the merchandise.

“They’re absolutely priceless,” he declared.

He also praised the agency staff.

“They have gone over and above the call of duty,” he said. “It has required an extraordinary effort to open this place.”



Mayor Allan Thompson unhooked the belt to officially open Evolve Friday, assisted by Caledon Community Services CEO Monty Laskin, Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, contractor Ira Idzkowski of Torcon Ltd. Councillor Johanna Downey, CCS Board Chair Carine Strong and Catherine Adair, manager of retail operations for CCS. Photo by Bill Rea