

FTP announces plans to mark 2014 International Women's Day

By Tabitha Wells

In a community that is taking on the issues of gender equality and gender violence head-on, celebrating International Women's Day (IWD) is a big deal.

That's why March 7, the day before the world-renowned day, Family Transition Place will be hosting its annual luncheon in recognition at the Best Western Inn and Suites in Orangeville.

"International Women's Day is about celebrating women's achievements and how far we've come," explained FTP's Manager of Development and Community Relations Stacey Tarrant. "The year marks the 103rd International Women's Day. It's a celebration of recognizing the achievements of women politically, socially, but also recognizing that there is still work to be done in regards to gender equality."

Last year, the event sold out in less than two weeks, with more than 300 people in attendance. After opening up ticket sales two months earlier than expected, over 50 per cent of tickets sold out in the first day. Only a handful of tickets remain. The event includes a women's vendor market, a guest speaker and of course, the luncheon.

The market runs for the duration of the event and provides the opportunity for women (and men in attendance) to shop the floor before the luncheon, as well as after things wrap up.

"It's a very important collection of gathering people in the community, and raising awareness back to the shelter and the services that are provided as we celebrate women and all the achievements of women," commented Gillian Vanderburgh, a local realtor and member of the IWD Committee. "It's important as a community to work together with all of the women who have a bigger challenge to reach those achievements."

The guest speaker at the 2014 luncheon is Lesley Page, a woman who went from working as a corporate executive to an award-winning pilot recognized for her achievements.

"She was a burnt-out corporate executive, and was in that stage of life where she needed to do something else," Tarrant said. "She decided to conquer her fear of heights and receive her pilot's license. She doesn't fly commercially, but she has won a lot of awards with regards to women in aviation, as well as helping women and children through this hobby of hers."

One of the purposes of the event is to encourage the community to get together around the issues and in celebration, reminding everyone that it's not just about one, two or a few people making a difference, but rather everyone standing together.

"I think what's important about it, and what has resulted from this event is that there is a huge sense of sisterhood and unity from everyone that has attended, unlike no other event that happens within the community," Tarrant added.

Tickets are on sale now through Family Transition Place. Prior to Jan. 15, they are \$45. After that, tickets are \$50. Options for corporate tables of 10 are also available.

For more information or to place an order, visit www.familytransitionplace.ca or by phone at 519-942-4122.