

Initiative will see hearts beating against childhood obesity

By Bill Rea

Much concern has been raised about childhood obesity, and a Caledon woman has resolved to do something about it.

Caledon village area resident Gloria Maxx is planning her HeartEsteem initiative, which will be launched April 10.

This a promises to be a world-wide initiative that will draw on the power of creativity, love and social media.

The plan is to unite people to draw hearts as a means of raising awareness of the mental and emotional anguish of childhood obesity, as well as its links to possible life-long problems. It will also be an effort to raise money for non-government organizations that fight the condition in countries with childhood obesity epidemics.

As well, the project will involve the filming of a documentary. The hope will be to connect at least a million people to draw hearts, resulting in a hybrid digital collage of hearts.

She also cited the spirit of such campaigns as Movember and the Ice Bucket Challenge, commenting on her hopes to raise money for groups committed to defeating obesity in kids, to a total of at least \$10 million.

Maxx brought her ideas to a recent Caledon council meeting, and received a lot of support. Mayor Allan Thompson told her council would pass the appropriate proclamation closer to the event. Councillors also got busy drawing hearts of their own in support of the effort.

Maxx described herself to councillors as "pretty much a global citizen."

She also said she's suffered impacts from childhood obesity all her life.

Maxx told councillors the initiative will last 100 weeks, with the April 10 launch at The Exchange in Bolton.

She stressed she was just seeking support from the Town, not money.

"I just love Caledon," she said. "I want to do it from here."

Councillor Annette Groves complimented Maxx on taking on an important issue. She added Peel Region has been looking into the matter, compiling a lot of research and data.

"It's not just physical," she commented, adding self esteem is part of it, and the issue of bullying comes into play too. "This is a very serious issue."



Councillors Annette Groves, Barb Shaughnessy, Johanna Downey and Jennifer Innis were busy drawing their hearts.



Gloria Maxx joins Councillor Doug Beffort as he holds up his heart creation.