

Mountains to Climb: Close 2 Home Caledon fundraiser sets plan in action

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Following their inaugural fundraiser, Fashion Blooms, organization Close 2 Home Caledon has officially begun fundraising for their dream of an inclusive community here in Caledon.

Close 2 Home Caledon is an organization raising funds to build community-based supportive housing for adults with diverse needs in the community.

Founded in 2024, Liana Cancian, Elena Rosati, and Blanca Polanco came together as individuals who had all experienced the challenges of limited housing options in Caledon and insufficient government funding and support, all with the same vision in mind.

Cancian says that with waitlists for accessible housing and services for adults with disabilities in Peel Region over 15 years long, limited government funding, and a lack of supportive housing, they seek to create a community in Caledon where young adults with developmental challenges and diverse abilities can live independently in community-based housing.

Most importantly, creating that community for these individuals so they can be close to their families and close to their homes.

But their dream comes with a high fundraising goal, and after officially obtaining registered charitable status, they have begun raising funds towards it.

They started their fundraising journey earlier this month with Fashion Blooms, their fashion show fundraiser.

Close 2 Home welcomed the Caledon community for an afternoon of fun, fashion, shopping, and more, all in support of a good cause.

After announcing their fundraiser, Cancian says they sold out, selling 240 tickets for the big day.

Unofficially, they've raised approximately \$90,000 from their first big fundraiser.

'It was our first official event [and we're] hoping to have many, many more. We plan to do this kind of event probably every year. I think it's going to be a great success; it seems we had a great response,' says Cancian.

Currently, their funds are set to be used for purchasing and retrofitting a home.

'It feels like a dream,' Cancian says, looking back on their fundraiser.

Being able to combine fashion with her love for her mission, she says, are two of her passions.

'This was literally just an idea on a dining room table in my home,' she says, reflecting on how the mission has grown.

'I was just in awe because I love to see the fashion part of it,' she adds. 'And then I love to see where it's going and the mission. It's truly a dream come true for me.'

Looking ahead to their goals, she knows they still have ways to go.

‘I still feel like it’s a tall mountain to climb,’ says Cancian. ‘Housing isn’t cheap and it is going to be a pretty investment. I don’t think it’s something we’ll be able to create tomorrow because housing and staffing is a big expense. But, in a year and a half, we’ve definitely come leaps and bounds.’

‘Starting a non-profit in my dining room, we’ve become, in just a short year, a charity. And then from a charity, we started planning events, raising money. In a year and a half, raising \$90,000 or more than that, is definitely something to be proud of.’

Cancian says there are days when she worries they haven’t made a dent in their overall goal yet, as they still have much to raise, but ‘it’s still a step in the right direction.’

At the event, she says it only pushed them to continue their mission after hearing how many people faced the same struggles they do, every day.

People were approaching the Close 2 Home team, saying that what they’re hoping to achieve is something ‘needed in this town.’

‘Hearing that, to me, is music to my ears,’ says Cancian. ‘I just feel like we are kind of trailblazing into something that is needed.’

‘It definitely touched a lot of hearts.’

They’re hoping to have the same event next year in April, for those looking to mark their calendars ahead of time.

‘At the end of the day, this project is a big project to take on, and it’s quite a hefty project,’ says Cancian. ‘You’re dealing with housing and you’re dealing with operations. If you do the math with the amount of four or five kids that need 24-hour care, it’s quite high. We have to continue to do fundraising.’

Cancian adds they’re always looking for long-term sponsors and partnerships, ‘those out there that are looking to invest in something that is going to be a legacy for Caledon.’

‘We really want to create a legacy home, a home that will continue to prosper for generations. But we can’t do it without the help of the community, without the help of some investors that take interest in this,’ she says.

‘We’re going to keep saying it over and over and be as loud as we can, because I’m confident that to keep this house sustainable, you could get it up and running in the first year or two. But, to keep it sustainable, we really need to have some really great investors that believe in the vision.’