

Much to do at Exchange

Re: CCS Celebrates Opening of the Exchange (Citizen, Feb. 6), we appreciate this attention because one of our top priorities in the months ahead is to attract all of Caledon to the Exchange. So what's next?

The Exchange's grand opening represents the climb to the summit. There are rewards on the top that honour the perseverance and dedication of so many community builders in Caledon. One such reward was when Melina, 8, and Zach, 6, recently dropped by with their mom to donate birthday gifts and a trunk load of food. Melina told me that she kept her family's gifts, but was donating all her other gifts from her party. This little one could make anyone's heart melt. She and her brother spent the afternoon with us, working in the warehouse. They returned the following week and volunteered once again. Melina is now wanting to launch a fundraiser in her school via the sale of bracelets. Her mom is making the Exchange a regular Friday afternoon volunteer experience for the two children.

This family has captured the essence of the Exchange: Engaging; healthy; community-building; fun. Melina and Zach's company a Friday afternoon can remind all of the Exchange's builders of exactly what we hope to accomplish in the months and years ahead. For families, we will soon have Mars Canada launching its Ben's Beginners family classes, where their chef will share tricks and tips that'll have your family eating healthy nutritious foods and even enjoying the preparation. We're working on weekend and evening programming as well, so stay tuned. The United Way of Peel Region has just committed a two-year grant to the Exchange, allowing us to work closely with almost a dozen other community agencies and bring their services into this community hub. When that begins, we're going to see all kinds of activities happening at once in this beautiful new community space. The Central West Local Health Integration Authority (LHIN) has expressed an interest in getting behind the Exchange so that it can support our seniors' health and wellness through activities and healthy eating.

The emerging picture is becoming clear: We're soon to have Caledon's older adults involved in one thing or another with Caledon's children; schools will come aboard to use the Exchange as a teaching tool; our community libraries want to launch programming here; and on and on it goes!

Please drop in on the Exchange Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The staff and volunteers are eager to welcome you, take you on a tour alone or with your family and tell you about the activities in which you can become involved.

Help us build the Exchange. Melina and Zach are, so can you!

Monty Laskin,

Caledon Community Services