

## PC?Caucus supports Hope 24/7

By Bill Rea

MPPs and their staffs routinely put together shoeboxes for organizations.

This year, the Progressive Conservative caucus donated the boxes to Hope 24/7.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP?Sylvia Jones was joined by her PC?colleague Laurie Scott of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and a representative of the office of York-Simcoe MPP?Julia Munro in dropping off dozens of boxes to the agency's Brampton office. Jones said the boxes were filled with items that any woman would likely enjoy, but may not splurge on. She observed when money is tight, motherstend to focus more on their children than themselves.

?The shoeboxes offer women the chance to have something special for themselves,? she observed.

?This is very specifically something for them,? she added.

Jones also said Hope 24/7 is a Provincially designated sexual assault centre serving Peel Region. It supports women in crisis.

Jones explained all three parties at Queen's Park encourage their colleagues and staff to put together shoeboxes every year at the holidays, with each caucus choosing the cause they contribute them to.

Scott, the Tory critic for women's issues and community safety, said they have been advocating for more resources for the agency for years, adding it's been overwhelmed.

CEO?Laura Ziney said the waiting list for services has been growing constantly. It was up to 142, but she said they have been able to get it down to 55.

?They're very underfunded for the amount of work they do,? Scott observed.

Hope 24/7 has been in operation since 1993, with an aim to assist individuals who have experienced traumatic interpersonal violence, and to provide violence prevention programming to create a community without relationship and sexual violence.

They're saving lives,? Scott added.



Matt Cunliffe, a member of the board of Hope 24/7 (far left) and Laura Ziney, CEO of Hope 24/7, accepted contributions of shoeboxes filled with items for women from Alanna Newman, representing York-Simcoe MPP?Julia Munro, Dufferin-Caledon MPP?Sylvia Jones and Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP?Laurie Scott. Photo by Bill Rea