

Procyon Wildlife's inaugural gala raises a whopping \$45,000

By **ZACHARY ROMAN**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Before the Province reversed its decision to dissolve Peel Region on Wednesday, the Region's non-profit sector kept pressing for greater support.

On December 7, the Metamorphosis Network called on the Province to ensure Peel Region's community services receive adequate support should the dissolution of Peel happen or not.

The Metamorphosis Network represents over 100 non-profits that serve health and social service needs in Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga.

On December 5, the Toronto Star reported that a source said Premier Doug Ford is considering reversing his decision that would have Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga be independent municipalities by January 1, 2025. This reversal came at a press conference on the afternoon of December 13.

The Metamorphosis Network said in its release that the non-profit sector in Peel needs to see a clear plan that includes funding to meet the needs of Peel's most vulnerable people.

The network said it's raising the alarm over "continued lack of adequate funding for regional services including long-term care, childcare, affordable housing, social assistance, and seniors' transit, to name a few."

Sharon Mayne, CEO of Catholic Family Services Peel Dufferin, said the January 1, 2025 deadline would be hard to meet with a fully-developed plan and that she understands why the government may want to carefully consider its plans for change.

"Peel needs real change," said Mayne. "We have crises in mental health, homelessness, housing, youth services, addictions, family violence, and seniors' support that remain unaddressed."

According to the Metamorphosis Network's release, Peel gets half as much funding for community health programs compared to the Ontario average. The release said Peel residents also have half as much access to emergency rooms and primary care compared to provincial norms.

"Peel receives less funding per capita for policing, education, and other essential services than either Toronto or York Region," reads the release. "Peel has half the population of Toronto, but about 1/8 the amount of social housing, and about 1/10 the number of shelter beds."

The Metamorphosis Network said since it was announced Peel would be dissolved, staff in the non-profit and public service sectors have spent thousands of hours reviewing what the change would mean for their organizations.

Gurpreet Malhotra, CEO of Indus Community Services, said Peel non-profits deserve real commitment and investment from Queen's Park.

"Whether dissolution proceeds or is withdrawn, whatever reform the Minister and the Premier have in store, we need a plan that meets the real needs of Peel. We cannot go back to the status quo," said Malhotra.