

Some good news

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Early in the pandemic, Actor John Krasinski started his own program called SGN, or 'Some Good News.' It was a reaction in part, to all of the bad news swirling around the US at that time. The episodes were heart-warming stories of what some people were doing to help make the world a better place during a global pandemic. After awhile they kind of petered out and I heard he apparently sold the concept likely cashing in on what was 'at least initially' a great endeavour. Probably good timing on his part since the US continues to sink under wave after wave of COVID cases and will likely to continue to do so while the great orange menace remains in charge. But I digress. This is supposed to be an article about some good news, a little closer to home and which is unlikely to be sold or otherwise tarnished. I'm talking about the unveiling of the Southfields Community Centre in Mayfield West.

I was lucky enough to be able to attend the official Opening Ceremonies for the event. There was a lot to talk about. The building is beautiful, modern, spacious, and they have given much thought to how community use has changed over the years to reflect different community needs, expectations and preferred usage styles. It has been earmarked as a true 'Community Hub'; a type of 'one stop shopping' community centre where a multi-generational family can attend a pre-school program, take a swimming lesson, get a library card, take out a book or use the computer at a library work station while watching their child at the swimming pool. The pool, (or pools) to the delight of many area residents, who lobbied hard for its inclusion, is a 'two tank' pool that allows for both lane swimming and therapeutic and parent/tot swimming to take place. There is a seniors gathering space and a youth gathering space, a community kitchen and a full multi-use room for badminton, pickle-ball or (in the future) even party rentals. The Caledon Library will be offering an outdoor reading garden in the future, they have amenities like an Adobe workspace and desks where you can either sit or stand and the children's section is 'doggone' amazing. The Caledon Parent Child Centre/EarlyON Centre will occupy a full, permanent space in the building providing a number of programs for both parents and children between the ages of 0-6 years. It also has a huge outdoor, safely fenced play space! A fully equipped fitness area, Caledon Community Services and Punjabi Community Health Services are also fixtures at the new centre as is Bright Scholars Montessori. Finally, in what I think is an important community initiative, the Caledon OPP will also have an office onsite.

The Opening Ceremonies, due to strict Covid protocols, were limited but there was plenty of excitement in the air for those able to attend. Town Staff did an amazing job of hosting the event with attendees spaced appropriately apart and the Town's very own 'Seventh Inning Cleaning Crew' wiping down spaces and microphones between speeches. In even more good news, Provincial and Regional partners were onsite to officially open eight EV stations at the Centre. For those concerned about climate change it's safe to say Caledon is leading the charge (pun intended) in electric vehicle charging stations with these 8 new spots adding to an already impressive community count. A great deal of behind the scenes work securing grants to help with the costs of installation helped move this part of the project forward.

Despite setbacks caused by COVID, the Centre was officially opened on budget and that is yet more good news. It will begin a gradual staged entry for community users over the next several weeks with regular updates about what is opening, and when, to be shared via social media channels and the Town's website. It's the first recreation centre to open in Caledon in the past 18 years and an important milestone for the Mayfield West community as it continues to grow. The Mayor, both in his former role as a Councillor for the area and now as Mayor, along with Regional Councillor Johanna Downey helped bring this project to fruition along with all the many community hub partners involved. Let's hope that as it gradually opens for use, it truly will become a community hub: a place where heart-warming stories are made in places like the Senior's room, or heard in locations like the Library or EarlyON Centre. Let's hope too, that unlike SGN, this will REMAIN in the hands of the community and FOR the community, for many years to come.