

Spring market highlighting local vendors coming to Valleywood]

Fundraiser for Cassie's Place, CCS

By Zachary Roman

A local woman wants to highlight entrepreneurs in Valleywood, Mayfield West and surrounding areas.

On April 1, Sonia D'Alimonte will host the 'Hop Into Spring' market in the Community room at the Margaret Dunn Valleywood branch of the Caledon Public Library.

'Everyone in the area can come out, see what they have' and support local small businesses,' said D'Alimonte.

To make the market family friendly, D'Alimonte said there will be complimentary face painting and glitter tattoos, as well as a visit from the Easter Bunny. For the adults, complimentary coffee will be available too.

'It's a spring and Easter theme, that way parents can come with their kids,' said D'Alimonte.

The market is being sponsored by Abhiraj Kumar and Prashant Upreti's AP Real Estate, which also sponsored last summer's Valleywood Block Party. D'Alimonte, Kumar, and Upreti are all Valleywood residents who are passionate about bringing more events to the neighbourhood community.

'They've been really great with helping me put together these fun things for the community,' said D'Alimonte, who organized last summer's block party.

Another block party is planned for this summer, with more details to come at a later date.

The Hop Into Spring market will also be a fundraiser for Caledon Community Services' Kidz in Caledon initiative. Kidz in Caledon helps local families in need enroll their kids in summer camps and recreational sports and activities. It also helps provide them with healthy food and snacks.

'We've got a lot of raffle prizes available and people can just buy some raffle tickets and then all the money that's generated from the sale of the raffle tickets will be directly donated straight to (Kidz in Caledon),' said D'Alimonte.

Another charitable initiative that will be going on at the market is a bottle drive for Cassie's Place, a home away from home for individuals with differing abilities. It provides numerous programs for individuals with disabilities such as day programs and summer camps, as well as a weekly bowling league and cooking and crafting classes.

'Everyone in the area can bring all their empties to the bottle drive on that day,' said D'Alimonte, 'And then all of the money that's generated from that supports the programs that Cassie's Place has.'

D'Alimonte has a background in event management and planning, and said she's super passionate about planning events and bringing people together. She also has a personal connection to the market, as her daughter Mikaela has started her own business: Mikaela's Cute Buttons.

'Mikaela started making fabric-covered buttons using primarily recycled fabrics,' said D'Alimonte. 'Mikaela and I have watched a couple of videos on fast fashion and the issues that textile waste is bringing to the environment. We both decided to pursue the avenue of upcycling as opposed to buying fabric, so it's been super exciting.'

D'Alimonte said with her daughter embarking on an entrepreneurship journey it's important to teach her to share some of the money she makes. Currently, 10 per cent of all of Mikaela's sales goes to Kidz in Caledon.

?We should think about ways that we can give back,? said D'Alimonte. ?Charities function almost sometimes solely on donations and what they can get in terms of grants? it's super important (to support them).?

Having attended many markets with her daughter, D'Alimonte said the community you find at them is so nice and at markets you get to meet so many people that are passionate about their respective crafts.

D'Alimonte said there's many people in Valleywood who run their own businesses with handmade items so she knew it would be a good idea to run a market in the neighbourhood.

The Hop Into Spring market is set to run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 1.

For more information about the market, or to check out some spotlights on attending vendors, those interested can visit [@valleywoodcommunityevents](#) on Instagram.