

The Learning Place to host fundraising gala

Peel non-profit supports adult learning in areas like English, mathematics and digital literacy

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A Peel non-profit is looking to expand its service to the community with funds raised from an upcoming gala.

On May 31, The Learning Place will host its fourth annual fundraising gala with a theme of 'A Night Under the Stars'.

The gala is from 6 to 11 p.m. at the Garden Banquet and Convention Centre in Brampton. Tickets are \$75 and can be purchased online on Eventbrite.

Sandy Sadsad, Executive Director of The Learning Place, explained the non-profit organization, which serves individuals in Peel ages 18 and up, has been around for over 40 years.

'We've always had a huge passion for' adult education because adults tend to fall through the cracks when they've got barriers they're dealing with,' said Sadsad.

She explained The Learning Place focuses a lot on basic skills in English, mathematics and digital literacy, adding that everyone in Canada deserves to have access to these skills. For higher-level learners, the non-profit also provides employment readiness workshops in areas like leadership, management, and office administration. These classes are free to participants with help from funding from the Ministry of Labour Training & Skills Development.

'Our goal is to restore confidence, upgrade skills that sometimes people may have not had an opportunity to learn over the years,' said Sadsad.

The Learning Place often supports individuals from underrepresented groups such as newcomers to Canada, women, and people with different sexual orientations and gender identities.

'Disadvantaged groups' general service offerings are not necessarily geared towards them, and we take into account some of the sensitivities these groups may be facing,' said Sadsad. 'To identify as having challenges with literacy can have a huge impact on people's self-esteem' we approach that in a very sensitive way.'

Sadsad said the work The Learning Place does is all about building equity in a world that's inequitable.

'Education can change everything,' said Sadsad. 'We always try to change someone's life and send them back out into the world better than when they first saw us.'

In addition to the free educational offerings mentioned above, The Learning Place also offers a paid educational program called 'Pathways to Growth' for adults with developmental disabilities. The program was trialed in 2019 to resounding success, with The Learning Place discovering there was significant demand for it.

Sadsad said this is partly due to the fact that once individuals with developmental disabilities are 18 or above, there's a lack of programming available to them.

'They're very capable, they're very smart, they just fit into the world a little bit differently than people are used to,' said Sadsad.

Sadsad said there's a few main goals The Learning Place would like to achieve with the money raised from its gala.

?One of the big goals is we really want to set up computer labs for Pathways to Growth because our tech for success workshop is one of our most popular workshops,? she said.

The labs would include assistive technology so everyone would be able to use them.

Another goal is to develop a new and updated curriculum for The Learning Place's language and basic skills programming.

A third goal is to create professionally-done educational videos and post them to YouTube so learners can review content at home at their own pace, to bolster learning even when they are not in the classroom.

For more about The Learning Place or to reach out about the upcoming gala, information can be found online at the following link: thelearningplace.ca.