

Victory house hosting fundraiser gala for women's shelter

Written By JOSHUA SANTOS

Victory House Association of Dufferin Caledon will host their first annual fundraising gala on Friday, Nov. 2.

The event will feature raffle prizes, music and dancing and live and silent auctions at the Royal Ambassador. Doors open at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. Funds from the night will go towards the organization's efforts to create a safe, supportive home for women and children in times of crisis.

"All the approval from the Town is in place now and from the government. Because we're a charitable organization we're able to do fundraising to move forward with it and get the community involved," said Patricia Valliere, executive director and founder for Victory House.

The organization is planning to refurbish a 5,000 square foot building. The goal is to raise \$350,000 to transform the Victory House. More than 50 volunteers have joined, working together to make the Victory House a reality.

"We have a building that has been donated to us by the Caledon Hills Fellowship Baptist Church on Airport Road. They donated the building with no lease cost for 25 years to start this house for women and their children in times of need. We're raising the money to renovate," said Valliere.

Victory House started from an inspired vision of a group of people in the Dufferin and Caledon area. After assisting several women in need, it became obvious that a safe home for healing had to be built. A building has now been made available in the hills of Caledon and once updated to meet the need, will be able to accommodate several women and children in their time of need, according to a news release.

The Dufferin and Caledon area sees on average, 100 women and 50 children in emergency shelters each year, with 30 per cent of these admissions as return visits, according to Statistics Canada.

"As I was walking with them, driving them and being with them, I realized that they have a very short period of time when they go into a transition home. Like 60 days to get themselves together, get a house, find a living space, which is very difficult to do within 60 days and while they're still in a very hurting spot," said Valliere.

"I just thought it would be time for a house like. I had a vision seeing this house as women who would come there with their children in times of need for up to a year. It could be six months or a year while they're going through programs and counseling and healing and then we'll be in a position to hopefully help them with some of the areas they are maybe not strong in like perhaps budgeting, child care, working, trying to find a job, trying to find a house; we won't have the answers to everything but we feel that through the counseling and support and help we will be giving them, they will be in a better place when the time comes for them to leave."

The property has access to over 40 acres of ponds and tranquility trails. The building will feature an upper floor that will be most suitable for the private rooms for the women and their children. A tour of the property is scheduled for the spring.

A variety of items donated by local businesses, contractors, professionals, churches and individuals will be displayed and available to bid at the gala. A jazz quintet will provide live music for the evening.

Individual tickets are available for \$100 or as a group of 8 for \$800. Tickets can be purchased at www.thevictoryhouse.ca.

The Victory House also accepts donations with cheques payable to Victory House Association of Dufferin Caledon or online at www.victoryhouse.ca. Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$10.