

Conservatives "allow families to make the decisions that impact them": Brown



By Brock Weir

Newmarket-Aurora's Conservative candidate Lois Brown is well on her way, inching towards victory one step at a time ? victory, that is, over her goal of 10,000 steps a day, knocking on doors in Newmarket-Aurora to get her message out there.

By last Wednesday's installment of Concerts in the Park, Ms. Brown had logged 16,472 steps that day alone or, according to her Fitbit, 6.4 miles.

?When I knock on someone's door, I think they feel a little bit more free to tell me what they really think,? says Ms. Brown, noting she doesn't believe she has stopped knocking on doors since she was first elected seven years ago. ?I am not hearing anything different at doors [now] than what I have heard all along. The issues of the economy are very, very important to the people who live in Newmarket-Aurora. They are concerned about stability and the long-term prospects of their own jobs and that is where we focus as Conservatives. We are focused on growing jobs because we know that is what is going to keep Canadians prosperous and our economy stable.?

As economic pundits as of late have questioned that very stability, Ms. Brown says her party is well on track to address these issues. Canada is not immune to the impacts of the global economy and lower oil prices, the debt crisis in Greece and a ?flagging? economy in China have all made a dent in Canada, she says.

?We're not immune from the impacts of those things because we are a commodity-driven economy,? she says, adding Canada's economy was ?acknowledged? as one to emulate at the 2010 meeting of the G20. ?We are doing things right to keep our economy stable. We need to face all of these issues that are going on around us. We can't change what is going on in the global economy. All we can do is strengthen what we can here in Canada.

For Ms. Brown and the Conservatives, this strength starts at home. Although she concedes the Conservative Government went into deficit financing to tackle the debt and balance the budget, she says it was a ?pragmatic decision.?

?You can either pay people to stay on EI and stay home and get nothing out of it, or you can invest in infrastructure projects and keep people working. That is what we did. We got infrastructure projects out of it. Are we going to do deficit financing? I don't think so. I think we're going to continue managing the economy carefully.?

The Universal Child Care Benefit boosted by her party has served to give parents more choice on childcare. ?Mom and dad know what's best for their child,? she says, and this extends to the family as a whole.

Looking at her own bottom line, through tax cuts instituted by the Conservative Government, Ms. Brown says she and her husband, Kelvin, have found their household is saving an average of \$60 a month. "Not chump change anymore," she says.

"All of the things we have done to reduce tax gives people the opportunity to make choices in their own lives for the things they want to do for themselves and their family," says Ms. Brown. "That improves their life because it gives them choice. It is not government making decisions for them. When people say to me [an issue] is not what they want and it doesn't impact their life, good. Here's your money back in your own pocket. You make the choice for your own life. That improves people's quality of life immediately."

Ms. Brown and her family moved to Newmarket over 30 years ago. In her early 20s, she became involved with then-MP Sinclair Stevens' campaign and through that avenue met many people who challenged her with difficult tasks she says ultimately became skills "and skills she says have served her well.

As a Member of Parliament herself, Ms. Brown says she often has a difficult time answering the question whether she prefers representing people in Ottawa, or working with them at a local level. But, at the end of the day, being in her constituency office near Bayview and Mulock is what ultimately provides "some of the greatest thrill."

"Here, I am able to impact someone's life for good," she says. "I can't always fix people's problems because a lot of the problems are consequences of their own decisions and I have no magic wand that changes consequences.

"When I have a family come into our office with a little girl in their arms who they are looking to adopt from overseas, and somewhere between the embassy and the adoption agency paperwork has gone astray [and they were told they would have to start all over again], people have adopted emotionally before they have adopted legally. In one case, I stayed in my office until 2 a.m. because that is when I could talk to Dubai and the person I needed to speak with put together the file with as much information as I could gather. Long story short, that little girl came into my office and I know I have changed her life forever."

As Ms. Brown looks ahead to the October 19 Federal Election, she says it is not about what she wants to accomplish, but about "what the people of Newmarket-Aurora are going to see bettering their lives."

"It is not about how much money can be spent and how much stuff we can throw at you, it is about what is going to be better for your family," she says. "If those are the things I can represent, and if those are the things I can take back to Ottawa, then my personal goal will have been fulfilled.

"There is nothing about a campaign I don't enjoy. I love being at the door talking to people. I love the thrill of coming into the campaign offices and seeing people here, doing a variety of jobs. The one thing I don't love is all the junk food I consume. However, with 16,472 steps, I am not worrying too much!"