

VIEW FROM QUEEN'S PARK: Women and girls who lead

By Chris Ballard, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

We recently celebrated International Women's Week and it was an important time to recognize the political, economic and social achievements of outstanding women and girls ? both here at home and around the world.

On April 9, I was joined at the Aurora Cultural Centre by the Hon. Tracy MacCharles, Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, to honour ten outstanding women and girls from the area.

Janice Hodgson

Janice Hodgson has been an active volunteer at the Canadian Cancer Society for nearly 15 years. She is an advocate for prevention and she sits on committees to help the Cancer Society with their mission.

She plays a vital role in raising awareness of screening and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. She was a board member with the Red Cross and the treasurer of the Anderson Division of the Girl Guides of Canada for many years.

Nancee Webb

Nancee Webb has been a director of the Aurora Community Arboretum since 2009 and recruits volunteers to help preserve a living natural legacy in Aurora. She has co-ordinated volunteers to plant and protect 1,000 trees and shrubs within the Arboretum.

She also volunteers for the Canadian Cancer Society, where she is responsible for staffing various Aurora sites during the Daffodil Campaign each April.

Nancy Coxford

Nancy Coxford has been dedicated to freeing women and children from violence through her work at the Yellow Brick House for more than 10 years. She has established a foundation that supports initiatives related to violence against women. Her expertise in this area has allowed her to guide others through philanthropic outreach of the capital campaign.

Her passion for assisting women and children is driven by her strong belief that everyone deserves to live with dignity, integrity and free of violence.

Ellen Campbell

Ellen Campbell has been an active member of The Gathering Place of Aurora for more than 15 years. She spearheads ?Queen of the Day,? a yearly event where women in difficult circumstances get the opportunity to work with a stylist and given new clothing for job interviews. She also heads a program that gives children gifts at Christmas.

She has dedicated her time for many years, supporting women and children in Newmarket-Aurora. She is also a volunteer for ?Wounds 2 Worship,? which counsels women and connects them with organizations that can assist in their area of need.

Kristine Carbis

Kristine Carbis is the Membership Secretary of Freedom 90, an organization in Newmarket-Aurora that raises awareness of people who depend on food banks in our community and across the province. She also organizes trips across Ontario to meet like-minded groups in search of solutions to help feed less fortunate families, of which the majority are women and children.

Ms. Carbis has developed a poverty program that demonstrates the difficulties people encounter when they are in need of food banks. She also spearheads a recycling initiative in her housing co-op that redistributes items to others in need.

Jackie Playter

Jackie Playter is a great community booster and leader in Newmarket. She was instrumental in helping to raise \$1,000,000 to build a women's shelter in York Region, which will be open in the Fall of 2015.

She is well recognized in Newmarket for her passion to revitalize the downtown, that has resulted in a vibrant and flourishing business community. Ms. Playter is a Chair of the Newmarket BIA and engages property owners and businesses in the downtown core.

Leah Hans

For the past six years Leah has been a member of Girls Incorporated at the York Region Office, an organization that focuses on the empowerment of girls and young women.

Leah also volunteers with YouthSpeak, a youth performance organization and has written a campaign and filmed a video for which she wrote the script about bullying and the masks that victims wear.

Tammy Farbod

Tammy Farbod has been an active member in the Canadian-Iranian Community in Aurora for many years. In 2010, she organized a weekly program for isolated Canadian- Iranian seniors where they have access to English lessons, exercise classes and an opportunity to socialize with their peers.

The program has become well recognized in the community of Aurora over the years and CHATS (Community and Home Assistance to Seniors) has continued the operation of the program along with the dedication of Ms. Farbod.

Emily Li

Emily Li is the Vice-President of Project Luke Council, a social justice council that encourages students to be aware and participate in social justice issues. She is also on the Legacy Leadership Council and Chair of Free the Children which is an organization that promotes education and human rights for young girls and children world-wide.

She also mentors young girls, encouraging and inspiring them to make a difference in the school and in their community. She helps students to develop their leadership qualities.

Susan Lanthier-Doyle

Susan Lanthier-Doyle is an active member at Welcoming Arms where she played an instrumental role in opening the organization in 2006. She has dedicated her time for over 17 years by way of supporting women and children in Newmarket-Aurora. She is also a volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul in Aurora.

She provides women with the information they need to navigate through the social service system which helps them to find employment, healthcare services and activities for their children. Ms. Lanthier-Doyle's home visits provide guidance, encouragement and compassion.