

AHS student continues support for Kerry's Place with holiday gift cards ? and so can you

By Brock Weir

Gift cards are always a safe bet for those on your shopping list this time of year; but local student Amanda Bishop is spicing up the occasionally bland gift of plastic by coupling it with an opportunity to give back.

Amanda, a Grade 11 student at Aurora High School, is encouraging the people in this community to come together and put a few checkmarks on their lists, all in the name of supporting the Aurora-based Kerry's Place Autism Services.

She has created a website at auroragives.tk that gives shoppers the chance to purchase dining gift cards for themselves or others with a portion of each purchase going directly back to Kerry's Place.

The first option is the Ultimate Dining Card. With the purchase of a \$100 gift card that gives you entrée to such restaurants as Swiss Chalet, Kelsey's, East Side Mario's, State & Main and much more, \$7 will be donated back to Kerry's Place. Cards purchased at a value of \$100 or more will be shipped free.

A second gift card option, cards can be purchased to cover everything ranging from groceries at Sobeys', to Amazon.ca, and just about anything in between, will see 1.5 ? 10 per cent of each card purchase, according to value, going to Kerry's Place.

?I thought, since the holidays were coming up, there are going to be a lot of people buying gift cards and gifts for other people, and this would be a great way to fundraise for Kerry's Place,? says Amanda. ?Kerry's Place is an initiative I see that is really needed.

They do a lot of great stuff for students and families who have students on the autism spectrum. They run a lot of great initiatives, so I feel we can help as a community to give back to them.?

Amanda first became aware of Kerry's Place Autism Services through her father, who has served on the organization's real estate board, which takes care of Kerry's Place residential homes across much of southern Ontario.

The more she learned about the organization and the services they provide, the more she wanted to become involved.

Her involvement began in earnest this past spring around World Autism Awareness Day when she and her fellow students on AHS's Empowering Students Partnership began their Tulips for Autism fundraiser, one they plan to spearhead again in the new year.

?The fundraiser went really well and we raised quite a bit for Kerry's Place, which we were really happy about,? she says. ?Part of that success is what motivated me to see people in our community care about this initiative and want to support them. I think that people don't realise how much of an effect ASD has on everyone's lives, because there is quite a large number of people affected by ASD or who have it. It is effecting everyone's lives. Kerry's Place really helps with it, wherever you are on the spectrum, or whether you're a family member of someone on the spectrum.?

For more information on Amanda Bishop's Aurora Gives initiative, including the purchase of gift cards, visit auroragives.tk.