

Girls Inc. of York Region formally re-opens its doors in Aurora



Girls Inc. of York Region formally celebrated their arrival in Aurora on Friday morning with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at their new digs on Wellington Street East.

Located just west of Industrial Parkway North, the move is the latest chapter in the evolution of a non-profit organization that has served young women and girls in the community for decades.

The move from their former location in Newmarket gives the non-profit a central hub for business operations, staff, and local programming.

?Girls Inc. of York Region inspires all girls to be strong, smart and bold,? they say.

The organization provide education, mentorship, and community-based programs designed to empower girls and young women to reach their full potential.

Programs operate throughout York Region and, here in Aurora, some initiatives, such as their camp-style programs, operate out of area schools like Wellington Public School and Devins Drive Public School.

?Having a presence in Aurora allows us to be more accessible to families and community partners across York Region,? said Barb Wallace, Executive Director of Girls Inc. of York Region, in a statement. ?At the same time, we remain committed to Newmarket and the entire Region, ensuring that girls in every community have access to our programs and support.?

Added Emily Agnoluzzi, Communications Manager for Girls Inc.: ?Our new Aurora location enhances accessibility, conveniently positioned near the Aurora GO Station and a YRT bus route. It's central location in York Region allows our team to travel efficiently across the Region to deliver programs and services where they are needed most.?

Friday's ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and members of the Girls Inc. of York Region Board.

Speaking to The Auroran after the ribbon was duly cut, Wallace said one of the many benefits of their new location was being able to use it in its entirety. They came from a shared space situation, and here they can have a bit more flexibility.

?We're fortunate enough to be able to have the entire space because it was shared space in Newmarket,? Wallace explains. ?We have been able to run programs in the evenings and it's great to have a separate entrance for girls to come in, and we've got book clubs running based on age ? a younger and an older group, and we have a teen group that comes in every Monday night ? and it's just really an opportunity to feel settled in the community.?

In addition to the programs they run out of their new location, programs in local schools include after-school initiatives, arts and crafts programs, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), and even a chance for participants to get their hands dirty ? think slime-making.

?We also do some homework help, we do healthy snacks, we get the girls to help us make the snack, make smoothies, veggies and dip, and other really fun things where they can get their hands on and learn life skills in a fun way.?

Girls Inc. of York Region was established in 1978 as a grassroots program.

More than 45 years later, programs now take place in every municipality in York Region and facilitate initiatives across more than 40 schools and community locations.

They help more than 3,600 girls participate in programs annually and are served by seven staff members and dozens of volunteers, ?all working together to deliver programs that empower girls and support families across the community.?

Girls Inc. of York Region is located at 154 Wellington Street East. For more information about what they do, visit girlsincyork.org.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter