

Local shelters supported by 100 Women Who Care ? Central York



Caring and giving have been the watchwords for 100 Women Who Care ? Central York Region since its foundation seven years ago ? and now they're extending their embrace to local shelter services.

On Wednesday, representatives of 100 Women Who Care ? Central York Region (CYR) visited Blue Door Shelter on Gorham Street in Newmarket to present an impressive cheque of more than \$11,000 to the service.

100 Women Who Care is based on the idea of women coming together once a quarter, \$100 in hand, and, in the course of just one hour, pooling their dollars to benefit one area non-profit and/or charity who are invited to present at each meeting.

Blue Door Shelters has been on the group's radar since its inception, and now this support is a reality.

?As a group of women, we come together to do everything we can to ensure local not-for-profits and charities have the funds they require to achieve the goals they want to deliver,? says 100 Women Who Care CYR founder Laurie Brakeboer. ?Blue Door has been on our radar since we started in 2015 and I think there were many of us who wanted to see it brought forward. Deborah [who made the pitch at the most recent meeting] made everyone aware of how important it was that they receive the funds to keep going with what they do.?

It was a timely donation, says Blue Door Shelters CEO Michael Braithwaite, noting that it's particularly important during a housing crisis.

?Blue Door supports our most vulnerable, but our most vulnerable come from our Out of the Cold program,? says Braithwaite, whose organization hopes to operate an emergency men's shelter, currently slated to be built by the Region of York in Aurora's south end. ?Right now, when our temperatures can drop to -20, the needs are substantial. The dollars we get from government doesn't cover all the needs we have, so this money will help us provide shelter, food support, and housing support for the hundreds of people we support every winter.

?Right now, about 80 per cent of people who come through the shelter system, is income-driven and lack of income?. We're in this crisis because of bad policy and only good policy changes can make that change happen.?

Part of that change, he says, is a Housing Prevention Benefit proposed by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH.ca).

?It's a groundswell that is going to change things,? he says of the CAEH's campaign.

In its seven years, 100 Women Who Care CYR has gone from strength to strength, but according to Ms. Brakeboer they're not immune from the affordability challenges that all Canadians are experiencing at the moment.

?Like many others, we are starting to experience a membership decline and I think? it's the economic situation of a great many people and just people re-thinking giving dollars, but at the same time we have so many people expressing interest in becoming members. There's just a joy of being part of this group. We really do have a lot of fun together: we have our social time before the meeting, the meeting is one hour from start to finish, so the time commitment is low. We're currently and always looking for new women to step up and join us because the larger the group is, the more money we can have. The more money we have, the larger the cheques our charities get.?

Braithwaite agrees, adding: ?100 Women Who Care is the power of scale and impact. You bring 100-plus women together and they each give \$100, that impact is then magnified over 100 times and it makes an incredible difference. That's community in action!?

For more about 100 Women Who Care ? Central York Region, visit www.100womencyr.ca. For more information on Blue Door Shelters and the services they provide, visit bluedoor.ca.

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