

McGrath named PC candidate for Newmarket-Aurora



By Brock Weir

Charity McGrath, the director of the York Region Food Bank, will carry the Progressive Conservative banner for Newmarket-Aurora in the next Provincial Election.

Ms. McGrath was voted Progressive Conservative (PC) nominee in a hotly contested nomination contest, challenged by incumbent Newmarket Councillor Tom Vegh and former Aurora councillor Bill Hogg.

Addressing an auditorium of party faithful after the ballots were counted on Saturday afternoon, Ms. McGrath thanked the myriad volunteers who have worked on her campaign so far, 70 of whom came out over the weekend to bring in the vote, she said.

"The people, that's it," Ms. McGrath told *The Auroran* just after embracing her supporters and calling for party unity. "They are my number one priority: listening to them, their concerns, and addressing those issues that haven't been addressed."

Coming in second to Ms. McGrath in the race was Mr. Hogg, who also thanked his volunteers.

"I think you guys did an amazing job," he said. "We ran a clean, ethical campaign and we have nothing to be ashamed of."

Voting got underway just after 9 a.m. at Sir William Mulock Secondary School.

At the outset, each of the candidates had the chance to address a packed house of party supporters, most of whom were wearing buttons and stickers indicating their candidate of choice, but it was also a chance to appeal to the undecideds in the crowd.

In her speech, Ms. McGrath, a resident of Richmond Hill, cited her local credentials, first moving to Aurora in 1994, bringing her daughter into the world at Southlake Regional Health Centre and raising her as a student at Cardinal Carter Secondary School here in Aurora.

"I have been a strong advocate for healthcare issues that have affected people closest to me, such as heart and stroke, mental illness and cancer awareness," she said. "I will continue to support healthcare initiatives here in Newmarket, at Southlake, and in the great province of Ontario. I will not forget our seniors, people with disabilities and those in need of low cost housing."

"I am fiscally conservative but socially compassionate. Being fiscally responsible is important. Just as you have watched every dollar in your household, I have fought to make sure that my company and other organizations that I have worked with are run responsibly. "I am on the Board of Directors and Chair of one of the largest food banks in York Region called Life Corps Food Bank, otherwise known as the York Region Food Bank. We currently supply over 52 organizations with thousands of families having food because of our initiatives with many children each and every month being fed in before school breakfast programs."

Fiscal conservatism, she said, is particularly important in light of what she described as "fiscal mismanagement" under the Liberal government of Premier Kathleen Wynne. Highlighting controversies surrounding the ORNGE Air Ambulance, E-Health, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Commission, and New Infrastructure Ontario, Ms. McGrath said Ontario currently has the highest debt of any sub-sovereign entity.

"This, ladies and gentlemen, is not acceptable," she said. "There are many issues that need to be addressed and I will do everything in my power to stop these financial injustices from continuing if elected. I am a mother in my mid-40s who understands and cares about the education of our children, the cost of higher education, jobs for our youth, and the environment in which we live. I will

work hard to attract new businesses to our community in Newmarket and Aurora [while] sustaining our current businesses.? With soaring energy rates being what they are, Ms. McGrath said we can't expect new businesses to relocate or existing businesses flourish.

?These are the issues that have moved me to step into public office to help create the change that is so very needed today,? she said, citing her behind-the-scenes work within the party to bring more women into politics, elect Ontario's youngest-ever MPP, and by-elections to maintain the PC momentum.

?I am the only candidate for nomination here today with a passion for Provincial politics that is actively involved with the party,? she said. ?Actions speak much more than my words could ever say. I have a proven track record of hard work and results to turn this riding back to blue. My promise to you is I will work hard for you and will always have an open door policy to listen to your concerns.?