

NDP is a 'party for the people,' says Newmarket- Aurora candidate



By Brock Weir

Ontario needs change, but for Melissa Williams, that change is not Doug Ford.

Ms. Williams, a local wellness business owner who was confirmed as the Ontario NDP Candidate in Newmarket-Aurora on Tuesday night promises 'change for the better' under a Provincial government led by Andrea Horwath, a government she says will reinvest in health care, hospitals, and schools, making life more affordable for Ontarians in the process.

'I believe in a party that is for the people and a party that can stick to its promises,' Ms. Williams tells The Auroran. 'I am passionate about serving the people I know in my community, that I have grown to love, and who have accepted me. That is the reason I sought the NDP nomination. I feel it is about time that the NDP had a stronghold in the riding of Newmarket-Aurora and the NDP is reflective of the needs of a changing population.'

The seniors population is growing, she says, and support for the aging population just isn't there. There are young immigrant families who are supporting parents, and living in Ontario simply isn't as affordable as it once was 20 years ago.

Ms. Williams has lived in Canada for the last 18 years. A native of Zimbabwe, she emigrated to Canada from South Africa with her family where she had lived for the previous 13 years. Canada offered more opportunity for her kids, she says, more opportunity for growth, and that was the reality found.

'When I originally came to Canada, I found that starting a new life and living just seemed to be more accessible, was more affordable, and over the past almost two decades, things have become steadily harder for people to start up again,' she says. 'Buying a house is kind of slipping away from many, many young families that are no longer able to afford a house. Things like hydro costs, things like grocery shopping? it is not as easy as it was two decades ago.'

The Ontario NDP is focused on bringing about more affordability, making life more accessible for newcomers and providing Ontarians of all demographics more opportunities.

'It is about giving them the child care option, making sure their hydro bills are not almost as much as paying for half your rent, for example,' she says. 'In the two decades that have gone by, life seems to be a little bit harder right now.'

From her perspective, there is one common denominator in the past two decades: the Liberal Government.

'The first thing you need to understand is the Liberals need to be shown the door,' says Ms. Williams. 'They have had enough time. We tend to have a lot of promises the Liberals offer just pre-election and they have had enough time; they have had 15 years and it hasn't come to fruition, so they need to go. Things are getting steadily tougher and it has really become a disaster. When you look at the PCs, they want to cut services more than what the Liberals have done. They have promised what the Liberals are promising with regards to cutting of the services is they will leave no stone unturned and they want to cut as much as \$6.1 billion in services, which is only going to hurt Newmarket-Aurora. That is not what we need.'

'Andrea Horwath is the best choice. This is change for the better. We don't need to move from bad to worse.'

Change for the better is change to make life more affordable and healthier.

'Under that umbrella of making life affordable and healthier, it is bringing in the pharmacare and the dental plan,' says Ms. Williams. 'It is making a childcare a \$12 per day option, it is slashing Hydro by 30 per cent. It is relieving student debt. It is offering affordable housing. Those are things residents in the area need to be able to understand and connect with, that this is what the NDP

are offering.

[It is about] health care, investing in hospitals, overhauling mental health care, supporting a housing system for the mental health care, creating, for example, a dedicated ministry that solely deals with mental health. [It is about] adding in extra long-term beds that are required for seniors, even looking at having a policy in place where seniors would be required, or workers and support workers would be required to spend a minimum of four hours at least with seniors. What we're getting nowadays is people are literally spending minutes with seniors in long-term care and that is not enough. They are very under-staffed.

In the weeks leading up to the June 7 Provincial Election, Ms. Williams says she is looking forward to connecting on a more personal level with the community.

That I really exciting; that is who I am, she says. I am somebody who serves within the community and that is where I strive. I am looking forward to being able to be the voice for Newmarket-Aurora, being the person [residents] can rely on to be able to take their issue to Queen's Park.