

NDP's Duff kept important issues from being lost in the shuffle



By Jeff Doner

When Newmarket & Aurora NDP candidate Angus Duff threw his hat in the mix to run in the provincial election, he knew it would be a tough battle.

As the results came rolling through on election night last week, he said he was hoping for a bit more support for the NDP all around, but was pleased with what he found while canvassing through his riding.

"I'm pleasantly surprised that Newmarket & Aurora is being restored to a more socially conscious government than has existed through a PC held seat for the past period of time," he said. "These results are positive for me in that respect, but would I have liked to have seen a better showing from the NDP? Obviously yes, but we'll have to see how things finish out."

This was Duff's first time running for election and he was confident that he and his team did what they set out to do by reminding the other parties that issues like poverty and housing costs are critical issues in Newmarket & Aurora that need to be addressed.

"I think we did a great job of keeping social issues on the agenda that otherwise would have been forgotten in this election," he explained. "We reinforced the message that things like education and child care are important issues that need to be addressed in this community."

That message resonated with 15-year-old Sterling Mancuso, a student at Pickering College, who joined Duff's campaign team as a volunteer.

Mancuso said he has been interested in politics for quite some time and wanted to take it to the next level by gaining some valuable experience.

"The election came and this opportunity came along and I thought it was a great time to get involved," he said. "The experience has been great. I've done a lot of canvassing door-to-door, I have had the chance to speak with a lot of interesting people in the area and it has just been a really great experience and I have learned a lot about how to run a campaign."

With Duff coming in behind Liberal candidate Chris Ballard and PC candidate Jane Twinney, Mancuso said he is hoping things continue to go up for the NDP from there.

He is looking to stay on to help out with next year's federal election and will also continue to stay active with the local NDP riding association.

Surrounded by his small, but rowdy team, Duff gave them full credit for helping him run his campaign.

?They were great,? he said. ?I had a team made up of seasoned NDP supporters who have been in campaigns as far back as 30 years ago, I had some New Democrats who have only been with us for a while and I've had some others who just joined with this campaign. Everybody pulled their weight, pitched in when needed and I certainly couldn't have done this without my team.?

Duff said the experience was very positive overall, but also said he learned some valuable lessons while on his first campaign.

?The primary lesson that came from this, I came on to the campaign two weeks late, and so there was a lot of learning that went on, so preparations for the next campaign will have to start much earlier,? he said, before addressing whether or not he would stick around to run again.

?We'll have to wait and see. It was fun and it has been an honour to represent the voice of social democrats, it's been an honour to represent the NDP and I will consider it for the future.?