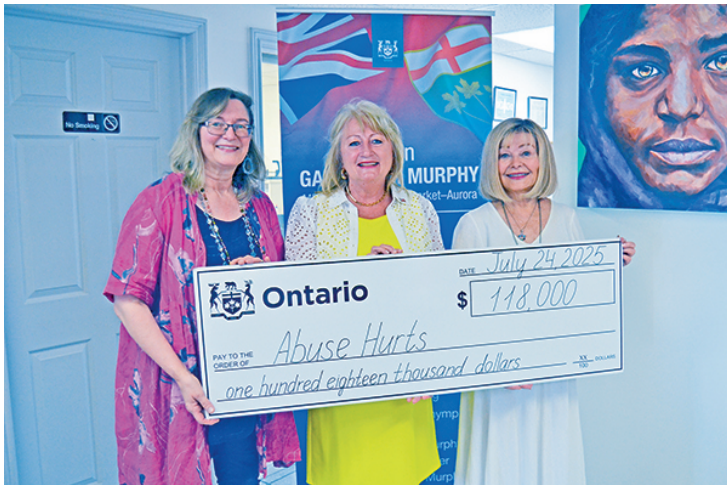


New Beginnings program will foster healing and independence for abuse victims



What does it take to help victims of abuse recover and reclaim their independence?

A step in the right direction can go a long way and Abuse Hurts has been long-dedicated to supporting survivors on their journey to recovery, and a new program initiated by the Newmarket-based organization will significantly increase supports to clients.

The New Beginnings: Life Skills for Healing and Independence initiative is set to soon get off the ground thanks to a grant of \$118,000 from the Provincial Government.

Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy was on hand at Abuse Hurts on Thursday morning to formally announce the Province's support for the initiative.

'New Beginnings will complement our flagship program, Delivering Hope,' said Abuse Hurts President Helena Kameka. 'It's going to be a future-focused initiative that is based for survivors, and it's going to really be what happens after crisis and equip survivors with life skills that they need to recover, rebuild and reclaim their independence. From financial literacy to confidence, self-esteem, as well as career readiness and a lot more, New Beginnings is going to help survivors take meaningful steps towards stability and also long-term wellbeing. Additionally, it's going to give those participants in this new program access to our Delivering Hope program, which is providing clothing, housewares, toiletries, personal hygiene items, and it's going to help them take meaningful steps toward rebuilding their lives.'

'We know that escaping violence is just a beginning, but it's a great beginning, it's the most important beginning, but true recovery requires support systems that address root causes and give people tools to thrive and not just survive. Our motto is, 'Scared is what you're feeling, but brave is what you're doing.' This program is going to be built with that in mind, being shaped through our work and interactions with survivors.'

That motto particularly struck MPP Gallagher Murphy, who said it truly encapsulated the bravery of those who seek Abuse Hurts' services.

'I see the difference that you make in people's lives, it touches me to the core and I've become a big advocate for Abuse Hurts. I couldn't be more proud than to stand here with you today for this announcement,' the MPP told Kameka and Abuse Hurts founder Ellen Campbell, at last week's presentation. 'For over 30 years, Abuse Hurts has [been] led with unwavering passion by its founder, Ellen Campbell, who is a pillar of hope for women, for children, and vulnerable individuals across Ontario. It is through your courage, your compassion, and your tireless advocacy that you've helped countless numbers of survivors navigate some of the most

darkest moments of their lives and begin a path towards healing.

“Today, I am incredibly proud to announce that Abuse Hurts will be receiving \$118,000 over the next two years in new funding through our Ontario's Action Plan to End Gender Violence. This investment is part of our government's \$98 million commitment to support up to 83 local community-based initiatives, each one dedicated to preventing gender-based violence and improving support for survivors. As a member of a government that believes deeply in protecting the dignity and the safety of all Ontarians, I am proud of the work that we are doing to stand with organizations like yours, organizations that understand the needs on the ground and are there when people need them the most. This funding is a recognition of not only the vital services that you provide, but of the trust and the impact you've built over decades. It's a vote of confidence in the work that you're doing and the lives you're changing every single day.”

Campbell said the organization was particularly excited to receive the grant as New Beginnings has been a long-held goal for Abuse Hurts and MPP Gallagher Murphy said she was looking forward to seeing how it would develop, hinting, “I'm so happy you're receiving this funding and, knock on wood, it's just the start.”

With funding in hand, the program will soon start to take shape. Kameka said they will work with survivors, community partners and experts to deliver the initiative “with care, intention and impact in mind.”

“We look forward to sharing more soon and to build a stronger and safer future together,” she said.

For more on Abuse Hurts and the services it provides, visit abusehurts.ca or call 1-833-292-4202.

By Brock Weir
Editor
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter