

Royal Rose Gallery extends support for Abuse Hurts



Aurora women will be able to extend their fashion dollar while supporting women and children fleeing abuse into the future, thanks to an ongoing partnership between the Royal Rose Gallery and Abuse Hurts.

The Royal Rose Gallery which lent part of their space on Yonge Street, just south of Wellington, for a pop-up shop benefiting the Newmarket-based non-profit this past April announced last week they have extended the partnership for a year.

“The community support has just been so overwhelming and they have been dropping off so many clothes and donations as well that it just made sense to continue and help Abuse Hurts for all the good work they do,” says gallery owner Rosa Calabrese-Teal. “The community, as a whole, loves to give back and support local [and] the charity being local and doing such good work really motivates people to get involved and it also helps with the crisis of fast fashion where people don’t necessarily want to go to the mall and they don’t want to buy a piece that they’re only going to use one time.

“With the donations, a lot of the items are brand new with the tags on them and [patrons] feel better buying it and also supporting a good cause at the same time.”

For the duration of the Hope Boutique, which is located on the north side of the gallery in the space occupied for more than a century by Caruso & Company, residents can donate their garments directly to Royal Rose, which has taken on the task of operating the store, while customers can pick up new and gently used duds with no one item costing more than \$10.

“Royal Rose Gallery offered to basically run the store for us where we would get the proceeds, which takes the administration off us and helps tremendously,” says Ellen Campbell, Executive Director of Abuse Hurts. “Apart from the sales, which certainly help, the store has really given us a lot of awareness.

“I have said this before, but we’re one of the best kept secrets. When a woman goes into the store and everything is \$10, she doesn’t come out with just \$10 worth of goods ? no one comes out with just one \$10 item. The store really depends on donations from the community because that is where the clothes are coming from. As customers come in, they are also bringing in donations of their own clothes, which is what we need to keep the store going.”

Items of particular need, Ms. Campbell notes, are shoes, dresses, women’s clothing, purses and jewellery.

“Coming into the fall, we’re looking for more fall clothing, jackets, sweaters, boots and things of that nature,” says Ms.

Calabrese-Teal. "We're also having a contest, so if you donate between now and the end of August, you will have a chance to win a \$100 gift certificate to the shops of Downtown Aurora."

The Hope Boutique now being able to plant firmer roots in the Town of Aurora is another success story in Downtown Aurora, one in which the Downtown Aurora BIA has proved integral, says Lisa Hausz, Economic Development Manager for the Town of Aurora and Council's representative on the BIA Board.

"We are really super-pleased that revitalization is happening organically like what is happening in the Gallery and with the Boutique, especially the support of Mayor and Council and all the movers and shakers who are supporting the downtown," says Ms. Hausz. "We're finding a lot of our entrepreneurs are really seeing a great response from the community, the Town, the BIA and even the Aurora Economic Development Corporation [which] placed a really keen focus on the downtown and the community is responding to that focus."

"From what we put in place, from support and putting some marketing and some promotion around the downtown, it wasn't that long ago that we had local artist Corrie Clark painting vacant store windows and that is just not the case anymore. The buzz is happening downtown and it is great to see."

Part of the buzz, she adds, includes a shift to more vintage options in the community, including a vintage pop-up located inside Replenish General Store just across the street.

"It's a unique spin on bringing traffic in on vintage, recycling, renewable and eco-friendliness," says Ms. Hausz. "I look forward to seeing where that goes in the future."

By Brock Weir
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