

Wynne hits Aurora's ridings in first week of campaign



By Brock Weir

The Provincial Election is well underway and party leaders looking to fill Ontario's top job are criss-crossing the province looking for your votes.

In the first week of the campaign, Liberal leader Kathleen Wynne hit both of Aurora's ridings meeting with local candidates, supporters, and members of the health care sector.

The second official day of the campaign took Ms. Wynne to Southlake's Stronach Regional Cancer Centre, accompanied by Newmarket-Aurora Liberal candidate Chris Ballard.

Coinciding with National Nursing Week (May 7 ? 13), Ms. Wynne met with medical care staff as well as patients receiving treatment in the Newmarket facility.

Earlier in the week, on Tuesday night, Ms. Wynne, a native of Richmond Hill, was back on home turf. She spent the eve of the writ drop holding a rally with Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Liberal candidate Naheed Yaqubian at her Oak Ridges campaign office.

Arriving to chants of 'Care Over Cuts!' from the sea of red-wearing supporters, this was a theme Ms. Wynne stuck to as she rebutted points made by Progressive Conservative leader Doug Ford in the first televised leaders debate held the night before. 'It was a good opportunity to be able to show that contrast between what we believe is right, what we know is needed right now, which is more care in our communities, whether it is support for people who are looking for mental health treatment, mental health assessment, whether it is child care or an investment in seniors care what we believe is government exists to do those things that people can't do themselves,' said Ms. Wynne.

This is in 'stark contrast' to Mr. Ford, she said, who offers 'Let's cut taxes, let's help the very richest in the Province, and let everybody just fend for themselves.'

'If he is allowed to do that, to take \$6 billion out of the services that we deliver to each other in this province, education and health care will be cut,' she continued. 'There is no way around it. Last night, we had a chance to see that contrast. He also turned to me at one point and said, 'So, Kathleen, when did you lose your way?' That was just after he said he liked my smile, whatever that meant. Whatever that had to do with anything! So, I answered him last night and I talked to him about the policies we've put in place and I am proud of the work we've done, full day kindergarten, building 24 hospitals, the Greenbelt, the Oak Ridges Moraine, and I grew up in Richmond Hill. I grew up in this community and I know how important that green space is, I know how important that land is to all of us. I digress.

'But, then you know how at 3.30 in the morning you come up with the really good answer? Yeah, well, I did that. At 3.30 in the morning I thought, I want to answer that question more directly because the direct answer is I haven't lost my way. I have never lost my way. My way is to go straight into delivering the needs and delivering the care that people need. That way is rooted in what I learned as a kid growing up in this community, and that is we have a responsibility to each other.

'We have a responsibility to make sure that little baby with those very cute pigtails, has the very best shot. That she has the very best

chance at the best life in the best province in the best country in the world. My way has always been to look at ways to make our society more fair, work that you have done all your professional life, to make sure we have justice and fairness and support to people who need it. That is what my way is and that is what our way is when we go into this election.?

But then there is the issue of financing all this, an issue which has dogged the Liberal leader well before the campaign began. There are those, she said, campaigners will encounter asking about 'investing in the future financial health of the Province?' and Ms. Wynne insisted the budget is balanced and the economy is growing.

'To suggest somehow that not investing in GO stations, not investing in the transit that we need, not investing in people, and what they need, that somehow that is not part of the economy is just wrong-headed. All of that is about the economy. Fighting climate change is about the economy, a strong health care system is about the economy, making sure newcomers to this province have support, that is about the economy. Our way is about an inclusive economy, about a society that understands that caring for each other makes us strong and that sets us apart from Mr. Ford, absolutely and finally.?'