

DC Moves - asking the questions that promote change

By Marni Walsh

At a recent forum of DC Moves, 'A Deeper Dive into Dufferin Agency Concerns', the County of Dufferin and Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA) collaborated to address questions they hope will lead to positive change for human service agencies in Dufferin-Caledon.

According to HCIA, the approach, titled 'DC MOVES' (Dufferin County 'Managing Organizing Validating Engagement Strategies) is an initiative of the Dufferin County Community Services Department, in partnership with Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA), who will be collaborating with Dufferin County to uncover opportunities to identify and develop innovative and/or collaborative solutions to human service issues.

'The association will be designed to foster a 'Made in Dufferin' agency integration model.'

Area executive directors and program leads from human service agencies in Dufferin were invited to participate and offer input.

HCIA Lead Shirley Boxem said the meeting focused 'around the challenges and opportunities in the community' that the group could potentially collaborate on.

'DC Moves will strive to be a data collector and a forum for convening, for starters,' she said. 'One aim is to 'get agencies together to discuss issues of shared concern that cannot be addresses by one agency alone.'

Discussion questions at the forum centred on solutions to those and other concerns included:

- What approaches could be undertaken to assist or support agencies to remain sustainable or to grow?
- What type of organizational structure supports or specific human resource supports (or training) do agencies require?
- As a collective, what approaches could be taken to better address some of the diverse needs of an increasing level of clients?
- Is DC MOVES the right table to lead a formal Collective Impact initiative; if so, why?
- As part of a collaborative, how can agencies make a difference in the broader concern of Health and Wellbeing?

The group purports that there is public perception 'that services in Dufferin County are often disconnected.'

'This is not unique to Dufferin County,' they advise, but 'as a result, community members often find it difficult to locate and/or navigate the different services available to them.'

Discouraged clients may thereby fail to be connect to the service provider they require, which could cause further issues for them and the community.

'For residents of Dufferin County,' HCIA contends, 'the key benefit of DC MOVES is the provision and making of a 'no wrong door' approach to service delivery; community members can be connected to appropriate services no matter which service provider they contact first, even if they are not the service provider that the client requires.

'This simplistic approach to service delivery conveys a message of support, open communication, and a desire to assist individuals

when in need.?

For more information visit: www.headwaterscommunities.org.