

New Foundation to enrich Dufferin holds very first meeting

By Marni Walsh

The Board of the Dufferin Community Foundation (DCF) recently held its inaugural meeting at the Lord Dufferin Centre. The long term goal of the Foundation is to enrich the community wellbeing of the County.

The new Foundation is an initiative of Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA,) established in 2004 to engage the public in vital community conversations and support the start-up of collaborative projects that enhance life in Dufferin, such as DCF.

The foundation is now officially a free-standing and incorporated entity - however, it still benefits from administrative support from HCIA, as well as some funding from the County. Project Lead for HCIA, Shirley Boxem says, "This demonstrates the County's commitment to building a strong community and speaks very highly of their vision."

Ms. Boxem says, "Foundations such as the Dufferin Community Foundation are a means to build support for community efforts and sustainability for not-for profit organizations."

In the works for two years, Ms. Boxem says the DCF effort has been a passion of, Gord Gallagher the newly elected Chair of the Foundation. He brought the directors team together to lay the ground work for incorporation and communications in order to build the Foundation.

The new Board of the Dufferin Community Foundation includes: Gord Gallagher, Chair; MaryAnn Lowry, Vice-Chair; Joan Waechter, Director; Steve Doney, Treasurer; Laura Ryan, Director; and Shirley Boxem, Secretary.

"Now the harder work of fund building and community engagement will really ramp up," says Ms. Boxem. Currently, a launch subcommittee is in the planning phase of an official fall launch event.

"A very key importance is building philanthropy by connecting donors, and particularly new donors, with causes that matter to them," says Ms. Boxem. "While donations can always go directly to efforts, garnering requests and future donations going to a foundation means that a solid base can be built for long term impact."

In a press release, Gord Gallagher says, "When it gets down to measuring success over the next five years, we'll be judged by our ability to build great partnerships with existing foundations and charitable groups to expand philanthropy in Dufferin. We'll be working hard to establish and grow endowment funds, conduct and publish research on community needs, and start using the investment earnings to support worthy projects."

The DCF plans for community participation include:

"Founders Circle" a group of individuals or families invest in the Foundation with a \$2,500 donation and a role as ambassadors in the community

"Corporate Circle" representatives from the Dufferin business community contribute \$5000 or more, provide sponsorships, and/or act as advisors to the Board

"Committees of the Board" in addition to Directors, community members will be welcomed to join the Finance (Funds & Grants) or the Community Outreach Committee.

"As we deepen our investment base," says Mr. Gallagher, "non-profit organizations can apply to the Foundation for grants to support projects in the areas of arts and culture, citizenship, connected communities, education, healthcare and healthy living, heritage, and innovations in natural resources and the environment."

According to Shirley Boxem, "more than 90% of Canadian communities large and small have a community foundation with more than \$5.2 billion in assets and have put hundreds of millions of dollars back into the community over almost 100 years." To learn more or become involved: dufferincommunityfoundation@gmail.com