

International Women's Day being recognized locally]

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Family Transition Place (FTP) is celebrating the accomplishments of women this coming International Women's Day with the return of its annual International Women's Day Celebration Luncheon.

The event will be held at the Best Western, located at 7 Buena Vista Drive in Orangeville, on Mar. 8 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

'The purpose of International Women's Day is to celebrate the achievement of all women, whether it's socially, culturally, economically or politically,' said Brennan Solecky, director of development and community engagement. 'It continues to be super important that we celebrate women on International Women's Day, and really every other day of the year, because women's rights are human rights.'

International Women's Day, which takes place on Mar. 8, is a globally recognized day that celebrates the achievements of women while raising awareness of issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence or abuse against women. International Women's Day was initially established in 1975 and is now sponsored by the United Nations.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day is 'Embrace Equity,' and will focus on how 'equity isn't just a nice-to-have, it's a must-have.'

'This day sheds light on not only women's rights and issues here locally in our community, but worldwide and especially in countries that are developing, where progress and recognition has been slower,' said Solecky. 'We owe it to women around the world to do what we can here in our community in one small way.'

Family Transition Place's International Women's Day Celebration Luncheon will include a vendor's market, silent auction, gourmet meal, and the 2023 issue of FTP's Celebrating Women magazine.

The event will also feature guest speaker Linda Murphy, known as The Healthy Hiker.

Murphy is a lifelong hiking enthusiast and Bruce Trail Hiking Leader. Her passion for outdoor adventures fuels her backpacking treks. In 2019, Murphy hiked 3,000 kilometres of the Pacific Crest Trail in the U.S., and last year completed a hike of the entire Bruce Trail (900 kilometres). Through the two treks, she independently raised over \$90,000 for victims of domestic violence, including Family Transition Place.

'In the short time that we've known Linda, the experiences that she continues to share of the folks she met on the way, whether they were victims of domestic violence themselves or advocates for local shelters, is pretty remarkable,' said Solecky. 'She's someone who gets what we're trying to achieve, and why International Women's Day continues to be so important to us.'

The funds raised through the International Women's Day Celebration Luncheon will go towards FTP's counselling and shelter services, but most significantly, their youth education program.

Family Transition Place has two full-time youth educators who spend five days a week in schools within the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) and surrounding school boards, teaching children in grades 3 to 8 about healthy relationships.

'Our plan is that we don't have to see them at the shelter needing services, but on the other end that they are aware of the services that are offered through Family Transition Place, should they ever need them,' said Solecky.

While this year's luncheon will mark its return after two years, it will also be the last year that Family Transition Place holds the event to recognize International Women's Day.

?We've had opportunities over the last three years that have challenged us creatively, personally and professional, and really pushed us to look at how we can have the greatest impact through what we are planning here in this community,? said Solecky. ?While we're so ready to welcome everyone back in-person for this signature event, we are ultimately very much ready to be celebrating International Women's Day on a totally different level.?

For more information about the event or to purchase tickets, visit www.familytransitionplace.ca