

Dufferin Parent Support Network celebrates 25 years of helping families

Written By **James Matthews**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Dufferin Parent Support Network looks forward to a fruitful continuation of a quarter century of service.

And a resilient communities grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation will help take the 25-year-old organization into the future.

Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin-Caledon, was on hand at the DPSN annual general meeting on June 12 to officially announce the \$16,800 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund.

The DPSN is a collaborative network of parents and community agencies that came together in 1999 to provide a network of support for parents of school-aged children.

The network promotes the idea that through more effective parenting, children and youth will become all they can be. They will develop emotional and physical well-being. They will be nurtured to believe in themselves, better handle life's challenges, and make healthy choices.

The DPSN promotes parenting skills based on understanding and working with children's behaviour.

"I was actually one of the individuals who, with my husband, used the services," said Jones, adding that her children are now 20 and 23.

"I see the value of those courses."

Jones said she wanted to acknowledge the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

"It is a standalone organization funded by Ontario tax dollars, but the assessments and the reviews of the [grant] applications are done by volunteers," she said.

And those volunteers, she said, live in the community and are beneficiaries of the grant money that goes to that community.

"I think sometimes we forget how much that happens in a community is actually driven by boards of volunteers," Jones said.

Many of the volunteers around the table at the AGM have either used some of the DSPN programming at some point or wish they could have availed of the services when their grown children were younger.

Neetu Dane, a member of the board of directors, said the purpose of the grant is to shore up the network's financial capacity to be sustainable in a post-pandemic world and to be responsive to diverse communities that make up the region.

Being awarded the grant affirms that the network is headed in the right direction and the organization's mission to support parents in their parenting roles is the right thing to do.

"We're still aligned with those values," Dane said. "And our mission will change very slightly, but more to engage more people. We're realigning our goals to engage more people in the community."