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Family Transition Place celebrates International Women?s Day with community breakfast

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Hundreds of community members gathered at Hockley Valley Resort on March 5 for Family Transition Place's annual International Women's Day Celebration Breakfast. The event combined celebration with fundraising to support services for women and families across Dufferin County and Caledon.

The morning event brought together community leaders, sponsors and residents for a program focused on recognizing the achievements of women while supporting programs aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Several local dignitaries attended the event, including Dufferin?Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post and members of municipal councils from across the region.

Lynette Pole-Langdon, executive director of Family Transition Place, welcomed guests to the event, highlighting the important role advocacy plays in daily life.

?On behalf of Family Transition Place, thank you for taking the time in your busy schedules,? she said. ?I know that your days fill up fast, and there are a million places for you to be, and there's lots of work for you to do. The fact that you've carved out time in your day, in your schedules, to be here, to support us and to celebrate with each other, we really, really appreciate that,? she said.

?We are really fortunate to live in a community that has incredible people that are so generous, and so that's where I think it's important when we have businesses and individuals that show up to support events like this, that we give back and make sure we support their businesses.?

Guests were treated to a gourmet buffet breakfast and a signature mocktail, while also participating in a silent auction and centrepiece auction. A series of games and prizes added to the atmosphere, with funds raised throughout the morning going toward Family Transition Place's programs and services.

During the program, members of Family Transition Place's youth education team spoke about their work in local schools and the role it plays in preventing violence before it begins.

Travis Greenley, a youth educator with Family Transition Place, explained the focus of the education program and the goals of the young girls they work with.

?We are trying to talk to young people in schools today about healthy relationships to hopefully stop them from coming to the front door tomorrow,? he said. ?Through our programs, we want them to be strong, resilient and adaptable in the face of adversity. Can they make the world better for themselves and people in relationships??

The program, which has been operating for more than 25 years, delivers classroom sessions for students from Grade five through Grade eight focused on building healthy relationships, empathy and confidence.

The presentations also highlighted research showing that girls can begin to doubt their intelligence at a young age, underscoring the importance of early education around self-esteem and identity.

Through a series of lessons, activities, and discussions, the program encourages students to challenge stereotypes, understand consent, develop emotional awareness, and learn how to recognize both healthy and unhealthy behaviours in relationships.

Running programs like this one isn't cheap, but Greenley said it requires ongoing support to keep operating.

?This program has been going on for over 25 years,? he said. ?It is an unfunded program. Events like this, sponsors, donors, Family Transition Place's commitment has allowed us to continue to go up the river and make this impact, hopefully maybe break some of the cycle of violence that we've seen.?

Ultimately, it is just one part of Family Transition Place's programming. They provide a range of services for women and children escaping violence or unhealthy relationships. These include emergency shelter, counselling, safety planning, outreach services and youth education programs delivered in schools throughout the region.

The organization serves communities across Dufferin County and Caledon and relies on donations, sponsorships and volunteer support to maintain its programs and continue providing assistance to those seeking safety and support.

The brunch event was a powerful moment for supporters and staff to come together and celebrate what they have achieved so far, and a commitment to continue pushing forward to effect even more change for the future.