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# Why I Participate in Home Shows

**By Sylvia Jones, MPP**

**Dufferin-Caledon**

Spring has sprung and in Dufferin-Caledon that means home shows.

During this time of year, I have a booth at the Caledon Home and Lifestyle Show as well as the Orangeville Lions Club's Home and Garden Show.

It is a great opportunity to hear directly from people regarding what they are concerned about.

Home shows also provide an opportunity for local businesses and organizations to promote their products and ideas.

Additionally, this is a great event for families and friends to come and see what's new and exciting in their community.

Not only do home shows provide an opportunity for organizations and business to showcase what they have to offer, but it also allows me to assist individuals with issues and concerns they have. Some of the most common items my office assists with includes helping obtain or renew birth certificates, marriage certificates, health cards, and driver's licences.

Additionally, my office assists with issues involving student loans, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and the Family Responsibility Office (FRO), among other programs.

In addition to assisting individuals, I also take this opportunity to hear what matters most to the people of Dufferin-Caledon.

At this year's Orangeville Home Show, I heard lots about how recent lab closures in Dufferin County are impacting individuals. Last year, there were five blood labs in Dufferin County, now there are only two.

As a result, it has become a common occurrence for lineups to spill onto the sidewalk at the remaining lab in Orangeville. In addition to lab closures, individuals were concerned with the government's decision to increase prescription costs for seniors by raising the annual Ontario Drug Benefit Program deductible from $100 to $170 and the co-payment per prescription from $6.11 to $7.11.

After much public outcry and opposition members criticizing the decision, the government reversed their decision to increase the co-payment per prescription and the annual Ontario Drug Benefit Program deductible.

At this year's Caledon Home Show,I heard from lots of individuals about skyrocketing hydro rates.

Last week, the Ontario Energy Board announced another increase to hydro rates effective as of May 1, due to lower than expected usage. Now Ontarians will be forced to pay more because they used less!

Households can expect to see their hydro bill increase on average by approximately $37.56 per year. Another important issue I heard from individuals at this year's home show was the government's recent decision to remove children with Autism over the age of 5 from receiving Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) therapy.

The government has decided that children over the age of 5 will be ineligible to receive this much needed support.

I have questioned the Minister of Children and Youth Services to reverse her decision, and will continue to pressure the Minister to ensure that all children with Autism receive the necessary support they deserve.

I want to thank the Orangeville Lions Club and the Caledon Chamber of Commerce and their countless volunteers that helped organize this year's home shows.

Events like this wouldn't be a success without the support from local volunteers and organizations. Thank you for organizing these important economic opportunities.