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DUFFERIN BOARD OF TRADE PHOTO

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Karen Sorensen, an independent senator for Alberta, was the keynote speaker at the Dufferin Board of Trade's Industry Luncheon on Feb. 26. The event took place at Hockley Valley Resort and was held in partnership with the Rotary Club of Orangeville, Grand Highlands Home Builders' Association, and the Dufferin Board of Trade. See more photos on Page 5.

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## Shelburne business targeted in overnight break and enter, offers \$5,000 reward for arrest

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**  
 LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Shelburne Iron and Metal was broken into on Saturday, Feb. 21, and company equipment was allegedly stolen before the suspects fled.

Shelburne Iron and Metal is asking for community support in apprehending the individual who allegedly broke into their business overnight. The business is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the suspect.

Katelyn Lehmann, manager of Shelburne Iron and Metal, said the company takes the incident seriously and that the reward is meant to encourage the community to respond and share information.

"We don't take criminal activity lightly, and we respect our community," Lehmann said. "By offering an incentive, we know people will talk, and it'll help us and the police, and hopefully the result will be one less criminal in our community."

"Money talks, and we proved it, because within hours after the break-in, we had a number of tips," she added.

While the damage could have been much worse, thankfully, Shelburne Iron and Metal already had some safety precautions in place, which minimized but didn't eliminate the potential for theft.

"There's never any cash left on site at the end of the day, so the intruder was unsuccessful at retrieving any money," Lehmann said. "But they took off with some of our handheld radios that are costly to replace, about \$400 [each] brand new."

Despite the theft, Lehmann said the move would leave the alleged perpetrator with nothing to use, as they took only the radios, leaving none of their supporting equipment. Police arrived on the scene soon after.

"They didn't get the brand new ones, nor did they take charging cables, so these items are useless to anyone but us," she said. "Our live security monitoring made contact with me to let me know a break-in took place. Police were already on scene and gathered the footage and evidence they needed to conduct their investigation."

Since the break-in, the OPP have continued to investigate the situation, and Shelburne Iron and Metal has been updated with additional information. They said that, with the investigation ongoing, they can't comment further at this time.

Lehmann said they have reviewed their business, added additional security features they believe will better secure the business after business hours, and issued a warning to anyone looking to break in again. They have shared similar warnings to nearby business-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**WANTED BY POLICE:** The alleged thief broke into Shelburne Iron and Metal overnight on Feb. 21, stealing the company's walkie-talkies, valued at \$400 each. A \$5,000 reward is being offered for information that leads to an arrest.

es to be on alert as well. "We acted quickly and made a few upgrades / changes," she said. "I won't speak too much on the enhanced security, but I'd suggest it's in the people's best interest to not come around here anymore if they want to be criminals. We've also spread the word around, always lock up and have deterrents and good security."

Anyone with information relating to the break and enter is encouraged to contact Dufferin OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or Shelburne Iron and Metal at (519) 925-3072.

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# Shelburne Curling Club seeks minor variance for new cooling plant

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Shelburne Curling Club is seeking a minor variance from the Town of Shelburne council to install a new exterior cooling plant, citing aging infrastructure, rising maintenance costs, and the need to prevent a potential system failure that could disrupt operations.

During a recent council meeting, club representative Rob Scott presented the request on behalf of the club's board, outlining plans to replace the facility's cooling plant, installed around 2006 and now showing signs of deterioration.

The plant, which cost approximately \$96,000 at the time of installation, has required increasing repairs in recent years, including an additional \$10,000 in maintenance costs in 2025 alone.

Scott told council the existing system is no longer reliable and is becoming increasingly resource-intensive.

"It's also obviously an older or less efficient plant than is available these days. High electrical costs," he said. "I think we budget between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a season for

electricity."

Club officials estimate the current system has only a few years of operational life remaining and warned that a failure would be "catastrophic" for the facility's ability to operate.

"We think it maybe has about five years left," Scott said. "We are again trying to get ahead of a failure that would be catastrophic for the function."

The club is planning to install a new cooling plant outside the building because it is not feasible to place a replacement in the existing basement space. To accommodate the installation, the club is requesting a minor variance to extend the current property line setback, which is presently five feet from the building.

"The new cooling plant... will be placed outside of the curling club," Scott said. "The dimensions required for it... come on the back of a flatbed truck, and they just crane it off and set it on a concrete slab that we'd have to pour. But we need to have three feet of clearance around the cooling plant, so that dictates the 17-foot by 14-foot."

The proposed location would extend into the laneway between the curling club and

the neighbouring fire hall. Club representatives noted that while the installation would use additional space, a 12-foot pathway would remain for access.

Safety measures, including protective fencing and barriers, would also be installed to reflect the new system taking up space previously unused.

Club officials said the new system would provide energy savings of up to \$10,000 annually, improve reliability, reduce maintenance costs, and lower the facility's environmental impact.

The Shelburne Curling Club said they have been in discussions with three companies regarding the required work and have identified a price range for the project.

"We have had a couple of interviews with three companies, and their costs range from \$225,000 to \$300,000," Scott said. "We've estimated an additional \$25,000 to pour a concrete slab and for electrical hookup to build a protective fence around it, and car barriers... we would need to install bollards too, because it'll be near the road."

The Shelburne Curling Club operates as a membership-funded organization with approximately 135 adult members and a grow-

ing youth program, and representatives indicated they are also pursuing grant funding to support the project. They are also looking for additional local support.

"We are hoping for whatever support we can get from our community as well," Scott said.

Council members were cautious about but not opposed to the curling club's plan, acknowledging the need to replace the aging ice plant while stopping short of endorsing the specific laneway installation.

Mayor Wade Mills ultimately directed staff to work with the club, the fire chief and planning staff to review access, site constraints, alternatives and long-term implications before deciding whether to support the proposal and any related grant applications.

"I think at this point, connect with staff," he said. "Let staff coordinate with the fire chief, have those discussions to make sure that there are no major concerns from their perspective. And then we can come back here."

The request for the minor variance will proceed through the town's planning process for further review and consideration.

# Shelburne Legion looks to rally community support after devastating fire in Horning Mills

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Royal Canadian Legion is living up to its reputation for supporting the local community, rallying around a member and her family who are beginning the long road to recovery after a devastating house fire.

In late November, a blaze destroyed the shop and garage of a Horning Mills property, where Kathleen McCauley and her mother, Ruth, reside.

The outbuilding housed the family's winter firewood supply — the primary source of heat for their home — along with tools and equipment used to maintain the rural property. The loss left them scrambling to address immediate concerns while facing mounting long-term costs.

McCauley said the first priority was ensuring the family could continue heating their home through the winter months. With the help of a friend who donated materials and labour, a temporary structure was quickly built to store firewood, easing the most urgent pressure in the days following the fire.

However, the destruction of the garage left behind extensive debris and the loss of essential equipment. Cleanup and removal costs, along with the need to replace tools and supplies, have created an ongoing financial strain.

Compounding the challenge is the fact that the property, which belongs to Ruth, was not insured. Ruth has been unable to work for several years due to health reasons, leaving the family to shoulder the full cost of recovery.

McCauley, who has been a proud member of the community since moving to Horning Mills in 1988, has long been involved in local volunteer efforts, including with Royal Canadian Legion Branch 220 in Shelburne.

Known for supporting veterans and community initiatives, the Legion is now turning that support toward one of its own.

After fellow members approached McCauley about organizing a fundraiser, plans quickly took shape for a Team Dart Fundraiser at the branch.

In addition, friends and supporters launched a GoFundMe campaign to help offset the growing expenses associated with the fire and rebuilding efforts. The online fundraiser aims to cover cleanup costs, debris removal, and the replacement of critical tools and equipment lost in the blaze.

The dart tournament will be held on Saturday, March 7, at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 220 in Shelburne. Registration opens at 9 a.m., with play beginning at 10 a.m.

The event will accommodate up to 40 teams. Participants are asked to register in teams of four at a cost of \$80 per team. Or-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**DART FUNDRAISER:** The Shelburne Legion, Branch 220, is looking to fundraise for a member who recently had their garage and shop burned down on their Horning Mill's property. The tournament takes place on Saturday, March 7.

ganizers say the goal is to combine friendly competition with community spirit, raising funds while bringing people together in support of the family.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three teams, and a 50/50 draw will also be held. Additional prizes will be available throughout the day.

The Legion's canteen will be open, and a cash bar will be available during the tournament.

Teams are encouraged to register and pay in advance by emailing [rcibr220secretary@gmail.com](mailto:rcibr220secretary@gmail.com) to secure a spot. The GoFundMe can be found at [gofund.me/de3ace14c](https://gofund.me/de3ace14c).

With both the in-person fundraiser and the online campaign underway, organizers are hopeful the broader community will once again demonstrate the generosity that has long defined Dufferin County, helping a local family rebuild after an unexpected and overwhelming loss.

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# Local restaurants to compete in Best Burger in the Burne contest

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It's time to rev up those grills, Shelburne, as the burger cookoff of the year is back on for the month of March.

The Best Burger in the Burne contest is returning to downtown Shelburne this March, inviting residents to sample creative burger offerings while supporting local restaurants, and is organized by the Shelburne Business Improvement Area.

Councillor Len Guchardi, a member of the Shelburne BIA board, explained that the competition serves multiple purposes.

"The competition was started in 2023 as a way to encourage foot traffic downtown and potentially assist BIA restaurants during traditionally slower months of March / April," he said. "All restaurants [participating] must be located within the Shelburne BIA area, and one lucky patron will through a random draw receive a \$100.00 gift card valid at any business located within the BIA."

The competition will be based on personal preference/popular vote, with voters using a ranked ballot system, meaning they will select the restaurants from most favourite to least favourite. The primary way to vote will be online, with QR codes posted at each participating restaurant.

For those who prefer a more tangible way to cast a ballot, or don't have access to tech-

nology, physical ballots can be cast at Shelburne Town Hall.

Codes and physical ballots will become available for voting in the last week of March.

Running throughout March, the friendly competition is designed to boost traffic in the downtown core during the late winter season. Each participating restaurant features a specialty burger created specifically for the contest. Customers can visit as many locations as they like, taste the featured entries and cast their votes.

The restaurants competing this year are Beyond the Gate, Dufferin Public House, Main Street Café, NF Chicken and Topsy Fox.

Each establishment brings its own spin to the classic burger, incorporating unique toppings, house-made sauces and inventive flavour combinations in hopes of claiming the title.

The winner will be announced after voting closes at the end of the month, concluding the competition on April 15, crowning one restaurant as home to the Best Burger in the Burne, winning them bragging rights for the year and a trophy.

The race is now on to see if last year's winner, Beyond the Gate, will be able to protect their title, or if it'll be overtaken by another contender.

Guchardi invites all residents to go out, embrace the local restaurant scene and cast their votes. He said it's a win-win for everyone



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**BEEFING OVER BEST BURGER:** The Best Burger in the Burne contest has returned and five local restaurants are competing for first place. Stop in at Beyond the Gate, Dufferin Public House, Main Street Café, NF Chicken or the Topsy Fox to try out a burger during the month of March and cast a vote.

involved.

"This competition is heating up, all the restaurants relish the thought of winning this contest," Guchardi said. "I truly believe that every vendor is working their buns off and putting their best patty forward. Every restaur-

ant makes an incredible burger so how can you lose? We invite everyone to come downtown, sample all the burgers, and have your say."

For more information, head to [shelburnebia.ca/best-burger-in-the-burne-contest](http://shelburnebia.ca/best-burger-in-the-burne-contest).

# Dufferin County council grapples with uncertainty surrounding the Buy Ontario Act

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Queen's Park has rolled out legislation to govern public sector buying without clearly defining the parameters of those rules.

Ontario Bill 72, the Buy Ontario Act, which governs public-sector procurement, is intended to strengthen provincial authority over public-sector procurement and to prioritize the purchase of Ontario- and Canadian-made goods and services.

It establishes a broader, enforceable framework that applies to government entities and designated broader public-sector organizations, including municipalities.

The Buy Ontario Act authorizes the provincial Management Board of Cabinet to issue binding procurement directives and establishes mechanisms for compliance, review, and enforcement. Municipalities and other public-sector entities are expected to comply with these directives once issued, with potential financial consequences for non-compliance.

County Councillor Fred Nix, who is also

Mono's deputy mayor, said there's much that's vague about the legislation. Mono might be looking to buy an electric truck for municipal use. To his knowledge, he said, electric pickup trucks are not made in Ontario.

"When we need a light duty pickup truck and we go to buy an electric one, do we know if this Act will prevent us from doing that?" he said.

"We don't know the answer to that," Nix said. "That's the concern I have."

Chris Hasson, the county's procurement manager, said the legislation is indeed vague. He said the county is being asked to adjust the scorecards used to weigh bids from companies to give Ontario-based ones an advantage.

They're being asked to adjust scoring and pricing and to allow for a 10 per cent increase if it is a higher bid for a product.

"So the score cards are going to reflect an Ontario/Canadian made product first," Hasson said.

Basically, it is "manipulating scoring to allow for Canadian or Ontario made products,"

he said.

"If there's no electric pickup trucks made in Ontario, maybe the score card doesn't even apply," Nix said.

Confusion didn't abate for Nix, and Hasson said many public-sector purchasers share it. The province is rolling something out without clearly defined rules and details, he said.

Bill 72 may have several implications for municipal procurement. The legislation will so far reduce local buying flexibility through binding provincial directives that may limit municipal discretion in procurement decision-making.

Municipalities may be required to verify vendor eligibility, track compliance, and document exceptions. That may increase administrative burden, particularly for smaller or rural municipalities.

Preference requirements may reduce competition in certain procurements and may

increase costs or extend project timelines, particularly for capital and infrastructure projects.

Municipal procurement is already subject to domestic and international trade agreements. Rigid Buy Ontario requirements may create uncertainty or conflict where federally funded projects or trade obligations apply.

And the legislation gives the provincial government the ability to withhold funding for non-compliance. That introduces financial risk even through technical or inadvertent procurement errors.

"All I can say is stay tuned," Hasson said. "Right now it is very vague."

Councillor Philip Rentsch, Grand Valley's deputy mayor, said he doesn't understand why the new rules should cost purchasers an extra 10 per cent.

Hasson said that's an estimate of a cost increase for local manufacturing.

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# OPINION

## Women's Day

The 'world' will be celebrating International Women's Day on March 8.

International Women's Day is celebrated globally as a day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women.

There will be events across Canada, the US, Europe, and in other countries as well.

International Women's Day has been around for over 100 years, beginning back in 1911, with a call to those who cared about gender equality.

It started in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland, where people attended rallies to show their support for women's rights to work, vote, hold public office, and live free from discrimination.

From a modern perspective, it's hard to believe that at one time, women in North America didn't have the right to cast a vote in an election. Women were also limited in other areas where men dominated decision-making, and they were expected to keep their place in society.

I guess women got fed up with being told that, even though they were citizens, they had no say in who was going to form the government.

Of course, there were also forward-thinking men who supported this idea and real-

ized that being a woman didn't mean you wouldn't understand politics. After all, every man has a mother, maybe a sister or daughter, and likely a wife.

Why wouldn't you want the women in your life to be successful and enjoy the same rights that you have?

The United Nations, the most useless organization on the planet, which has a reputation for accomplishing nothing, is proudly announcing that it supports International Women's Day.

According to the UN's website, the theme for Women's Day is "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls," which calls for "action to dismantle all barriers to equal justice: discriminatory laws, weak legal protections, and harmful practices and social norms that erode the rights of women and girls."

On the page, it also says, "In many countries, the law allows for early and child marriage, which erodes the full potential of about 12 million girls annually."

Does it not occur to the UN that the 'many countries' they are talking about are the same countries that are members of the United Nations?

These member nations are the same countries that treat women like third-class

citizens, or worse.

Who at the UN wrote about 'social norms that erode the rights of women and girls', while sitting at a desk next to the representative of a country that has laws stating a female shall not leave home unless accompanied by a male relative?

Who wrote about 'social norms' after having lunch with a representative from a country that practices female genital mutilation as part of their normal way of living?

Who wrote about 'social norms' after having coffee with a representative from a country that bans education for girls, while forcing women to completely cover themselves from head to toe before leaving the house?

How do these women even manage to have friends if you can't even recognize someone you pass on the street?

On the same UN webpage, it states, "Women have only 64 per cent of the legal rights that men hold worldwide."

The UN makes this statement as if something has to be done about this gap in rights. Yet ambassadors to the UN are powerless to even suggest that a country needs to modernize.

I read an interesting essay by a woman who was born and raised in the US but

had parents who were immigrants from Northern Africa.

The woman had the opportunity to travel to Northern Africa to visit relatives. She was surprised to experience the culture her parents had come from.

Her relatives were shocked that, at age 20, she had not yet been married off. They could not believe this woman was attending university. They had no concept of higher education and told her a woman shouldn't even be attending school.

They told her a woman was supposed to have children and stay home, and that was it.

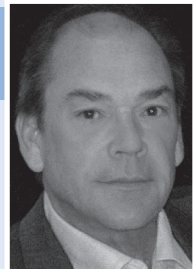
At the end of her essay, she said she was shocked at how oppressed these women were, and they didn't even know it. She said she was thankful to have been born in the West.

The key to advancing women's rights globally is education.

People living in an oppressive society won't develop the concept of freedom if the cultural norm is oppression, and this is taught to children from birth.

Enjoy International Women's Day 2026.

**BRIAN LOCKHART**  
FROM THE SECOND ROW



## The fallout from Epstein

"It's amazing how the arrest of a 66-year-old man in Norfolk has raised the spirits of the entire country," remarked a reader on the letters page of the Guardian this week. "Perhaps a few more arrests are in order."

The 66-year-old man was Mr Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, until recently known as Prince Andrew in polite circles and as 'Randy Andy' in the British gutter press. He was arrested on 19 February for 'misconduct in public office', not for raping an under-age girl called Virginia Giuffre in Geoffrey Epstein's houses in London, New York and the Caribbean.

But at least he was arrested (and immediately released on bail).

Four days later, on 23 February, another British notable briefly honoured the inside of a British police station with his presence. It was Lord Peter Mandelson, a renowned 'fixer' in British politics and briefly UK Ambassador to the United States. The charge was the same vague 'misconduct in public office', and he, too, was immediately let out on bail.

But at least he was arrested. Nobody has been arrested in the United States as a result of the release of three million confidential documents belonging to the late financier, convicted paedophile and possible spy Geoffrey Epstein. Nobody at all is doing jail time for it except his partner-in-crime Ghislaine Maxwell.

The only people who have been arrested are Europeans: Andrew and Mandelson in the United Kingdom and Norway's former prime minister Thorbjørn Jagland (who only accepted free family holidays from Epstein).

It was probably just bad luck that the names of the two British men were not redacted in the Epstein data dump. Their names simply didn't ring a bell with the 500+ Department of Justice employees who spent several months redacting the names of prominent American men who had availed themselves of Epstein's various services.

So they were named and shamed (they have already done their 'perp walks' for

British television), but it is unlikely that they will ever spend time in a British jail. 'Misconduct in public office' is a notoriously hard charge to make stick, and the possible charge of rape against Andrew is even harder to prove since the alleged victim is dead.

As for Epstein's vast network of information exchanges (which would also have served Epstein's work as a spy if he really was one), the case may remain open forever. We are left only with speculation – so let's speculate.

Start with the recent remark of US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, billionaire pal of Donald Trump, that Jeffrey Epstein was "the greatest blackmailer ever." Blackmail is usually about money, but it can also be for information.

From the guest-lists at his various houses of ill repute, it's clear that many of Epstein's guests were chosen as sources of information or ways of reaching other potential informants rather than just because they were filthy rich. And if they were vulnerable to being blackmailed, it was often because Epstein had taken the trouble to give them guilty secrets.

Why would he do all that? It seems too elaborate if Epstein's intention was just to create a modern version of the Hellfire Club (look it up), but it was the ideal tool if his intention was to gain access to a wide selection of powerful and well-informed Americans.

Some of them just wanted free holidays, some of them wanted to rub shoulders

with other famous people, some of them wanted to have sex with under-age girls. Whatever their tastes, Epstein satisfied them.

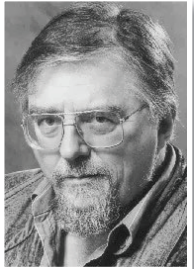
So what intelligence agency would have the greatest interest in knowing America's secrets, including especially political and commercial secrets? Well, the leading candidate is obviously the one that is most dependent on American support in almost every aspect of its existence: Israel.

How would the Israelis have recruited Epstein, if they did? Through Ghislaine Maxwell, whose father Robert had worked closely with the Israeli spy agency Mossad. She moved to New York and linked up with Epstein shortly after her father died.

Does this prove that Epstein worked as an Israeli spy? Of course not, but it certainly makes him a candidate for the role. If he did, it's not such a big deal: Israel has always had spies in America. Jonathan Pollard was caught in the 1980s and spent 30 years in prison. Lawrence Franklin was caught in 2006 and sentenced to 13 years (but released very early).

There were doubtless other spies for Israel who did not get caught: these are almost routine transactions, although the unlucky ones who get caught pay a price. If Epstein was gathering sensitive but not officially secret information, he probably was not even breaking US law. But we'll never know unless Maxwell does a deal under some later administration.

**GWYNNE DYER**  
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# COMMUNITY VOICES

## Monthly Message: Shelburne Food Bank facing storage crisis as demand surges

Demand for food support continues to rise – and while donations and food rescues keep coming in (thank you!), we are starting to run out of space to store and distribute food safely.

Listed below are five reasons why the Shelburne Food Bank need more space:



### Increased demand

Our food bank is experiencing rising demand due to:

- A higher cost of living
- Job losses and / or unstable employment
- Inflation affecting food prices

With more families relying on food bank services, this requires additional storage and distribution space.

Extra space allows for:

- Proper separation of food types ( dry, refrigerated, freezer)
- Better stock rotation ( FIFO - first in, first out)
- Safer, less crowded working conditions for volunteers

### Better Client Experiences

With more space, we could provide:

- An indoor waiting area for clients (rather than them outside in the snow and rain)
  - Private spaces for registration, interviewing and support conversations
  - More efficient distribution flow
  - Potentially able to offer the client a shopping model
- This helps preserve dignity and reduces long wait times.

### Community programs and services

Additional space can support:

### Limited storage capacity

Our food bank often receives:

- Large bulk donations
- Perishable items that require refrigeration or freezer storage
- Seasonal surplus donations (for example, holidays)

Without adequate space:

- Donations may need to be declined
- Food may spoil due to a lack of room
- Stock organization becomes difficult

### Improved food safety and organization



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**STORAGE STRUGGLE:** Volunteers at the Shelburne Food Bank are facing a storage crisis, amidst an uptick in demand. The food bank is looking to expand its space to improve efficiency and better serve families.

- Nutrition education programs
- Partner agency coordination
- Emergency response storage
- Potential for more delivery hampers

Expanding our space allows us to safely store more food, improve efficiency and better serve families in need within our

community. No family should ever go hungry because we ran out of space.

We are looking ahead – an increase in square footage at the food bank would not only provide us with much-needed storage now but also support our anticipated future growth as we become an ever-increasing presence in this community.

## Family launches GoFundMe to return remains of son following fatal car crash

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A fundraising campaign is nearing its goal after a fatal crash in the Township of Melancthon claimed the life of a 24-year-old international student.

The online appeal, titled “In Loving Memory of Udampreet Singh,” was launched by his cousin, Amanjot Singh, following his death on Feb. 26 at St. Michael’s Hospital. Singh had been hospitalized after a motor vehicle collision the previous evening.

As of press time, the fundraiser had raised just over \$38,000 toward its \$40,000 goal in five days.

Udampreet Singh had come to Canada on a study permit with plans to eventually bring his parents to join him from India once he had established himself in the country. His family sacrificed much of what they had to get him to Canada to study.

Originally from Yamunanagar in Haryana, he is survived by his mother, father and younger sister, who remain in India. His family is now working to have his remains

returned to India so his parents can perform his final rites according to their traditions, as well as allowing his family to say a proper goodbye.

Arrangements are being made through the Brampton Crematorium & Visitation Centre.

The collision is under investigation by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).

In a separate statement, the Dufferin Detachment of the OPP said officers responded alongside Dufferin County EMS and local fire services to a two-vehicle crash on Feb.

25 at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Emergency crews were dispatched to County Road 124, just north of 20 Sideroad, for a serious collision.

Police said a 24-year-old man from Brampton was transported to a Toronto-area hospital, where he was later pronounced deceased. The investigation remains ongoing.

The OPP is asking anyone with information or dashcam footage of the incident to contact the Dufferin OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or to provide information anonymously through Crime Stoppers.



DUFFERIN BOARD OF TRADE PHOTOS

**INDUSTRY LUNCHEON:** The Dufferin Board of Trade’s Industry Luncheon, held at Hockley Valley Resort on Feb. 26, featured Karen Sorensen, who has served in the Senate of Canada, representing Alberta, since 2021. Sorensen is originally from Orangeville and prior to her appointment to the Senate, she was the Banff’s mayor for three terms. She spoke about leadership, sustainability, reconciliation, tourism and the power of collaboration. The speech was a reminder that strong local communities help to shape national conversations. The luncheon was held in partnership with the Rotary Club of Orangeville, Grand Highlands Home Builders’ Association, and the Dufferin Board of Trade.

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# Care Days bring health services to Dufferin County residents

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Care Days aim to make it easier to access health and social care in Dufferin County.

Dave Pearson, the Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team's executive director, told Dufferin County council during its Feb. 26 meeting that Care Days are planned for Dufferin and Caledon until June.

The Care Days are opportunities to provide more health care closer to home.

"As we've seen there's been a lot more uptake and reception from the public," Pearson said.

Care Days are catching on in the community and are attracting attention from other health teams and the province.

The team will add the ability to identify, register, and support residents seeking access to local team-based care that includes

physicians and nurse practitioners.

While they wait to be connected, Pearson said the type of Care Days offered can be customized to targeted health care needs such as cancer screening, chronic disease support, or diabetes day.

Food insecurity is of interest in the county, he said. And the team would like the opportunity to respond to that.

Pearson said people who have been without a physician for a number of years need that "basic health" taken care of.

"We can do all of those things now," he said. "Our aim is to generate more visual and marketed messaging to people of our community so they can gain trust and connection with local providers."

Pearson added, "We are days away from finalizing a communications package and website that we will share with county council."

"This is the right care at the right time, the right place," he said.

The team has a website in the works with the aim of enabling members of the public to register for Care Days.

"If you are unattached to a team of providers or to a family physician and you would like to access care locally, we would like to know about you," Pearson said. "We would like to offer you care."

Pearson said many members of the Dufferin community may be more familiar with county facilities and locations than health care facilities. He said they would like to, at times, pare down the team and offer services in such settings as libraries.

He asked councillors to reach out to the team if they knew of an area of care that would benefit people on Care Day, or if there was a community location that might

be a suitable venue.

"Please let us know, and we can work with you to plan a Care Day event," Pearson said.

Councillor Fred Nix, who is also Mono's deputy mayor, asked how many people have availed of Care Days in the county.

Pearson said some of the events have drawn as few as three people, while others have attracted as many as 30, 40, or more.

"That may seem like a low uptake, and I get that," Pearson said.

But he said the teams are at a stage where they're learning to work together. And health service providers aren't known to go to the communities. Rather, he said, they expect the community to go to them.

"It's changing the relationship, and that takes time, it takes trust, and it takes a level of commitment," Pearson said.

## Shelburne Public Library holding annual Seedy Saturday event to promote sustainable gardening

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Shelburne Public Library is inviting residents to dig into sustainable gardening and community learning at its annual Seedy Saturday event on March 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., marking the official launch of the library's new seed library initiative.

The event introduces a community-driven program that offers patrons free, non-GMO, heirloom seeds to grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers at home.

According to the library's CEO Shannon McGrady, the initiative aims to revive traditional practices that have faded with the rise

of industrialized farming.

"We are so excited to launch our seed library with our annual Seedy Saturday event," McGrady said. "Saving and sharing seeds is as old as agriculture itself, but with industrialized farming, the tradition of sharing seeds has been slowly disappearing."

Seed libraries operate on a 'borrow, grow, return' model. Visitors select a small number of seed packets to plant at home, then return a portion of the harvested seeds to the collection for future use.

The model promotes sustainable gardening practices, biodiversity and community knowledge-sharing while helping gardeners connect and learn from one another.

Several local organizations will take part in the launch, showcasing gardening and food-related resources and services.

Community partners include Shelburne Food Bank, Town of Shelburne Community Garden, the Shelburne Horticultural Society and The Neighbourhood Market.

McGrady also credited key contributors who helped make the initiative possible, including Hawthorn Farm Organic Seeds for a substantial donation of seeds and volunteer Brenda Carling, who organized the project.

"The seed library would not be possible without community champions including Hawthorn Farm Organic Seeds who once again made a substantial donation of seeds,

and our Seed Superstar, Brenda Carling," McGrady said.

Attendees at Seedy Saturday will also get a preview of the library's upcoming March Break book sale, which will run from March 16 to 20 and feature a special selection of gardening and food-growing books.

Through the new seed library and the Seedy Saturday event, the Shelburne Public Library hopes to encourage environmentally conscious practices, strengthen community ties, and support local food sustainability efforts.

For more information on the Shelburne Public Library and its services, go to [shelburnelibrary.ca](http://shelburnelibrary.ca).

## Fire at Fratelli Cannabis store deemed non-suspicious by Dufferin OPP

A Fratelli Cannabis store was destroyed by fire on March 2.

On Monday at around 7:46 a.m., emergency services responded to a fire at the pot shop, located on Dufferin Road 109 in East Luther, just south of Grand Valley.

According to a Dufferin OPP news release, the fire has been deemed non-suspicious.

No information was provided about the cause of the fire or damage to the building.

Fratelli Cannabis, which also has a Mount Forest location, posted to Facebook on Tuesday about the fire and expressed appreciation for the community's support.

"While this is a tough moment, we are staying hopeful and grateful, and we will keep you updated on what comes next," stated the post.

The business did not respond to requests for comment.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**BIG BLAZE:** Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers and the Grand Valley & District Fire Department responded to a structure fire on County Road 109 in East Luther on March 2.

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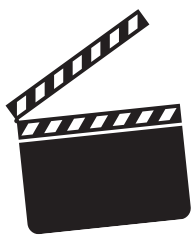
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# Arts & Entertainment

## LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS



### Shelburne author releases educational children's book on mindfulness

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

Shelburne teacher Christie Reid recently published her very first book, *The Guide Inside*. It's a children's book, designed to teach youngsters about mindfulness.

Naturally, the first question was to ask for Reid's definition of mindfulness.

Her initial response was aimed at teens and adults, "Mindfulness is being present with our body, aware of our internal self. How my immune system is boosted during meditation."

Along with meditation is breathwork, which she learned from Gio Bartolomeo, a breathwork teacher: "breathing into our chest, into our belly triggers the Vigus nerve and makes you restful," she said. "It is leading you into a sense of calm and peaceful awareness."

For children, Reid suggests they can be shown how to tune in to their body sensations and feelings, learning how to become calm when needed. For example, when a child has a negative picture or an "unhelpful thought" that worries them, suggesting letting the picture flow up into a cloud and be taken up and away can reassure the child and make them feel safe. These are some of the tools for imagining and managing stress.

Reid's daughter, Aura, is four years old and well aware of her mother's solutions to

negativity. It seems the benefits are wider still, as Reid commented that she has noticed her daughter's vocabulary is broader than that of other children.

"She is very imaginative, making up stories that she tells me," Reid said.

Currently, Reid is working on her MA in Counselling Psychology, having already achieved a Master's in Teaching. She said she is really working on her Master's, which she reckons should be done in December.

When presenting mindfulness to children, she introduces the idea of "regulating" anger as a tool for expressing calm and avoiding reactivity.

"Being a teacher, I saw this every day, how not to react but being calm; how well that works for the child and the parent as a discipline using slowing your breath."

Reid's charming book comes with cards to support what is inside the book. In addition to the character she has imagined and brought to tell the children readers stories, the book is also an introduction for parents that gives them a place for self-reflection.

A portion of book sales, \$2 each, goes back to day care and other community programs and emotional regulation workshops.

"Everyone has their sensitivities," Reid said, "the difference is making your house more harmonious. This is a way to build harmonious, loving homes."

She finds that the friends she has talked

to about this love it. There is information on the back of the book about how children from zero to two years old are starting to form attachments, and that parents need to pay attention and begin building that awareness.

When a child pushes a lot and has meltdowns, parents need to learn to regulate. To dive deeper into the issue, Reid took a course on children's mindfulness and yoga.

In addition to furthering her education with her second MA, Christie Reid wants to help people learn to protect their body systems by being calm; to understand and give the tools to "find safety within." She has completed a breath work certification. Recently, she learned about Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) of tapping the pressure points in the body with one's fingers, which once again stimulates the "Vagus nerve," easing anxiety and stress.

This is a holistic therapy born of ancient Chinese medicine.

"The nervous system is an important aspect of our bodies for healing and we have to protect it by breath work and emotional freedom," Reid said.

She sees her future and for her daughter a good life of connecting with people and giving back to the community. Her husband, Brad, supports her efforts.

"Taking care of Mother Earth .... and for Aura, also dancing for sure."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**NEW RELEASE:** Christie Reid, a Shelburne-based teacher, is happy to release her first children's book, *The Guide Inside*. It is a book about mindfulness for children and encourages self-reflection among parents. The *Guide Inside* is available now at BookLore in Orangeville.

### Town of Shelburne to screen the SpongeBob movie for March break

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of Shelburne is hosting a screening of *The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants* later this month.

The Town of Shelburne is inviting families to enjoy a free community movie screening at Grace Tipling Hall during March Break, offering a fun and accessible activity for residents and visitors of all ages.

The event, taking place on March 20, from 2 to 4 p.m., is part of the municipality's ongoing

efforts to provide family-friendly programming and create opportunities for community members to gather and connect.

The animated film follows the underwater character SpongeBob and his friends on a comedic adventure, delivering humour and excitement geared toward younger audiences while appealing to fans of the long-running franchise.

Organizers say the screening is intended to give families a free, entertaining way to spend time together during March Break while encouraging participation in local events and

programming.

Municipal officials regularly offer seasonal events and activities designed to promote recreation, community engagement, and accessible entertainment.

The March Break screening reflects the Town of Shelburne's continued focus on creating inclusive programming that supports families and provides residents with opportunities to enjoy shared experiences in a welcoming environment.

Grace Tipling Hall, located in downtown Shelburne, frequently hosts community

gatherings, performances, and public events throughout the year.

The venue serves as a central hub for arts and cultural activities in the community, making it a fitting location for the family-focused screening.



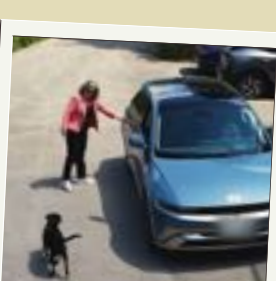
Admission to the event is free, and attendees are encouraged to arrive early to secure seating.

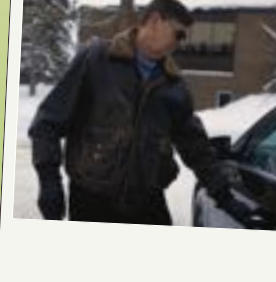


More information about the screening and other upcoming programs is available through the Town of Shelburne's online events calendar, at [calendar.shelburne.ca/default/Index](http://calendar.shelburne.ca/default/Index).

# ME and my EV


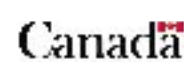
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[www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)

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*Our government continues to invest in programs that help women build strong futures.*

*The Women's Economic Security Program provides training opportunities in skilled trades, information technology, and entrepreneurship.*

*Investing in Women's Futures, which helps women develop in-demand skills and access new career pathways.*

*Through Better Jobs Ontario, we are also enhancing financial supports, including help with child care and living costs, to make it easier for women to enter or re-enter the workforce and pursue meaningful opportunities.*

*Across Dufferin-Caledon, women play a vital role in strengthening our local economy, supporting families, and building communities.*

*Today, we celebrate your achievements and the positive impact you continue to make close to home.*




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This understanding was key to my decision to pursue a degree in Integrated Business and Humanities at McMaster University. The program combined my two passions, and taught me that capitalism contributes to social well-being through innovation, employment and wealth. So businesses exist to serve people, not the other way around. People first, in other words, and this begins with financial literacy for everyone.

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# Canadian women’s entrepreneurship surges, but equal representation remains elusive

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

Canadian women have taken the business world by storm over the last 50 years, more than doubling the number of female-owned businesses.

While women owned less than 10 per cent of Canadian businesses in the mid-1970s, they now own roughly 20 per cent of all private-sector businesses in Canada today.

However, greater advocacy is needed to achieve true gender parity in the business world. Male ownership accounts for the remaining, approximately 80 per cent, of businesses, and women face systemic challenges when pursuing entrepreneurship.

To help close the gap, the Government of Canada launched the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) in 2018, a nearly \$7 billion initiative that offers a variety of supportive programs.

“Studies show that advancing gender equality and women’s participation in the economy can add billions in GDP. Since creating Canada’s first-ever Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, our government has helped hundreds of thousands of women start new businesses, grow their existing businesses and expand into global markets. Investing in women entrepreneurs isn’t just the right thing to do; it’s an economic imperative and a smart strategy for a thriving future,” said Rechie Valdez, Minister of Small Business.

One challenge that women face when starting a business is access to financing. To address this, the WES Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative is helping to create a more equitable venture capital environment. The initiative funds projects that “strengthen and build a more inclusive venture

capital environment for Canadian women,” according to the Government of Canada.

Another key support to address funding challenges is the WES’s Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, which provides loans of up to \$50,000 to female entrepreneurs and business owners.

The WES Ecosystem Fund helps strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem’s capacity and provides the resources women entrepreneurs need to launch or grow a business.

The WES’s Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub provides a one-stop source of knowledge, data and best practices for female entrepreneurs. The hub is a collaboration between 10 regional hubs, more than 250 organizations and thousands of women entrepreneurs.

To date, over 400,000 women have been supported through the WES strategy.

“Women-owned businesses are not only driving economic growth through job creation but also bringing in higher revenues year over year, generating over \$90 billion in sales revenue across Canada, and accounting for more than 865,000 jobs,” said Wendy Cukier, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Strategy at Toronto Metropolitan University.



“There are also multiplier effects of SMEs, including those owned by women, across sectors and communities. And women are more likely to contribute to sustainable development goals. There is a surge in women-founded companies across sectors from technology and finance to health care and consumer goods, attracting significant investment and market attention. As we move into challenging times, we need to ensure women entrepreneurs are central to strategies for resilience and self-sufficiency.”



## TAMARA CRISP - CRISP COUNTRY GARDENS

Tamara Crisp is the owner and founder of Crisp Country Gardens, a locally rooted horticulture and garden design business she has grown from the ground up. This year, she proudly celebrates her 10-year milestone in business, marking a decade of serving her community with creativity, knowledge, and dedication.

What began as a personal love of plants has evolved into a full greenhouse and garden service focused on growing, education, and meaningful connection. Tamara grows many of her own plants from seed and cuttings, offering locally cultivated indoor plants, seasonal florals, soft landscaping, and thoughtful garden design. Her approach blends creativity with hands-on horticultural expertise, helping clients create spaces that are both beautiful and sustainable.

Deeply involved in the gardening community, Tamara serves on Shelburne’s local horticultural board and remains committed to promoting horticulture within the region. In addition to her greenhouse and garden work, she can often be found at local markets throughout the season, connecting directly with customers and sharing her passion for plants and practical garden knowledge.

As both a business owner and lifelong learner, Tamara is currently continuing her formal education in horticulture to further strengthen the expertise she brings to her clients. Rooted in authenticity, hard work, and a genuine love for growing, Crisp Country Gardens reflects her belief that gardening builds confidence, resilience, and connection through every season.



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## YASMINE STEPHENS – LESSON UP

As the proud owner of Lesson Up, I am honoured to be featured in Women in Business. This opportunity allows me to reflect on the journey of building a program that supports children, families, and our greater community through quality before and after school care.

When I opened Lesson Up nearly five years ago, my vision was to create a safe, nurturing, and inspiring environment where children could learn, grow, and feel valued. What began as a small group of four has grown into a thriving program built on trust, compassion, and dedication. Over the years, we have expanded our programming, strengthened our partnerships with families, and developed a team deeply committed to excellence.

I would like to recognize Pam Parr, our Senior Program Leader, whose leadership and commitment help guide our daily success. I am also incredibly grateful to my mother, Vinnette Sinclair, for her unwavering support and encouragement to keep going, even in the early stages when the future felt uncertain. Every milestone, from enrollment growth to positive parent feedback, represents resilience, heart, and hard work.

As a woman entrepreneur, I understand the challenges of leadership, growth, and balance. I also recognize the strength, empathy, and determination women bring to business. Leading Lesson Up has strengthened my confidence and deepened my commitment to empowering others.

This feature is more than recognition; it is a celebration of resilience, collaboration, and community impact. I am grateful to share my story and stand alongside other inspiring women shaping our local business community.



## CLAIRE KNIGHT-CROWE, REALTOR

Claire has been in real estate for over 22 years after having a successful career selling health supplements, which included experience as a National Sales Manager where she hired, trained and supervised a sales team for all of Canada. Even though Claire has a Masters Degree in Sport Management, her business education and background has been transferrable to real estate, especially when it comes to her unique marketing strategy to maximize the sale price of her listings.

As a real estate professional, Claire (and her husband Dave) serve both Dufferin and Wellington Counties and enjoys a loyal repeat customer base in both regions as a full time member of two Real Estate Boards. Claire is outgoing and friendly and enjoys working with her clients and meeting new people. “I love the relationships I build with my clients,” Claire explained. “That’s the big thing – talking to people and building relationships built on trust, knowledge and local market experience is key. Buying or selling a home is your biggest financial decision, and being involved in such an important part of people’s lives and being able to help people with that is pretty special.” While Claire enjoys working with people in town, she has special knowledge of country properties (she owns one herself) which really requires a unique and intimate knowledge of rural areas and the nuances of maintaining a property that is not connected to town services. Claire’s passion is real estate investing. She enjoys helping clients build their net worth through Real Estate to achieve their goals of retirement, owning a cottage or investment property.

Follow Claire and her personal real estate experience on IG, FB or Youtube at @claireknightrealtor - ZBMortgageFree. Claire gets the most fulfillment by helping clients and followers become mortgage free, so that they can live their best life, travel and invest without financial stresses of a mortgage.



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## LOUISE WATTS – WATTS GRAPHICS Local Small Business Owner & Lifelong Graphic Designer and Artist

Louise has lived in Shelburne for over 18 years and works directly with clients and local businesses throughout Dufferin County. She truly appreciates the friendly, supportive atmosphere of the community she calls home.

A graduate of the Advertising & Graphic Design program at Humber College, Louise continued refining her skills as a graphic artist at a local newspaper and print shop. After completing an entrepreneurial program in Orangeville, she founded Watts Graphics.

Shortly after, she partnered with Blissco Promotions, becoming a valued team member providing graphic design, customer service and support for corporate branding, marketing programs, promotional product sourcing and camera-ready artwork for a wide variety of printed materials.

With over 20 years of experience, Louise brings extensive knowledge of the printing and promotional products industry.

She is very personable, creative innovative thinker and professional graphic artist.

“I love getting to know new people and working one-on-one to help them bring their vision to life through branding and creative design.”

“Whether you’re a business owner who knows exactly what you want or a first-timer unsure where to begin, that’s where my expertise comes in. I’m happy to ask the right questions and guide you with a plan and budget that suits your current situation.”

Louise takes pride in the relationships she builds with her clients – many of whom continue to connect with her for ongoing branding advice and custom projects.

Watts Graphics helps individuals and small businesses with logo design, advertising, custom printed marketing materials, and promotional products.

Proud to support local businesses at every stage of growth.



# Family Transition Place works to advance gender equality through International Women’s Day

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

A global celebration of the cultural, political and social achievements of women is being marked locally today to recognize International Women’s Day (IWD).

Family Transition Place (FTP) is hosting its annual IWD event at Hockley Valley Resort (793522 3rd Line EHS, Mono) on March 5. FTP is inviting the community to enjoy a morning of connection, celebration and meaningful impact. The event features a buffet breakfast, signature mocktail, silent auction, and prizes. All funds raised from the breakfast will support FTP’s mission to build a safer, healthier community.

While IWD is a celebration, it’s also a time to advocate for accelerating gender equality by breaking down barriers, eliminating violence, and ensuring equal rights.

“International Women’s Day (IWD) is always meaningful for us at Family Transition Place. It’s a time to reflect on the services we provide to women, children, and families and on the collective responsibility we all share in creating a community where safety, hope, and equality are possible,” said Lynette Pole-Langdon, FTP’s executive director.

“This year’s IWD campaign is entitled ‘Give to Gain’ and focuses on encouraging a mindset of generosity and collaboration which contributes to the advancement of women and girls. Living and working in our ever-growing rural community, we see firsthand how deeply connected we are and how progress happens when we show up for one another.”

She added, “Every one of us can make a difference by giving of our time, expertise, advocacy or resources-

whether it’s volunteering your time and expertise, supporting local fundraisers, or providing donations if you are able, those are the actions that will help us build a more connected, supportive community where we can all thrive.”

IWD was started in 1911, when millions of people in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland attended rallies to show their support for women’s rights. At the time, women couldn’t vote, hold public office or live a life free of discrimination based on their gender.

While progress has been made, there is still more work to do, and IWD provides a great opportunity for the community to come together to further advocacy and reflect on milestones.

The breakfast’s presenting sponsors are RBC Royal Bank, Roud Wealth Management RBC Dominion Securities, and GoYoga Orangeville.

“FTP is pleased to partner with these generous sponsors, whose support plays a vital role in making this annual celebration possible and in strengthening FTP’s ability to deliver essential programs and services for women and their families across the community,” reads a press release from FTP.

For more information, contact Kelly Lee at Family Transition Place 519-942-4122, ext. 243, by email at [kelly@familytransitionplace.ca](mailto:kelly@familytransitionplace.ca) or visit [www.familytransitionplace.ca](http://www.familytransitionplace.ca).



## MARG MCCARTHY - MCCARTHY REALTY

Meet Marg McCarthy, the Broker of Record for McCarthy Realty Brokerage in Shelburne and Dundalk, ON. Having grown up in Dufferin County, Marg intimately understands this region’s towns and rural areas.

As a local business owner for over 45 years, Marg brings a wealth of area knowledge and business expertise to every transaction. Her extensive background in sales and marketing provides valuable insights for anyone looking to buy or sell a home, all while upholding her core values of honesty and integrity. With a constant quest for learning, Marg remains a top-selling local Realtor in the Shelburne and Dundalk areas.

Over the years, Marg has established a broad network of contacts throughout Dufferin County and across Canada. These connections, along with her open and welcoming nature and extensive residential and commercial experience, have proven invaluable to her success in the real estate industry.

Marg leads The McCarthy Realty Team, which consists of strong female Realtors and administrative staff dedicated to supporting and educating clients throughout the sales process. Marg and her team specialize in ensuring a positive experience during various life milestones, such as downsizing, saving for a dream country property, or navigating the complexities of estate sales and separations. Thousands of happy past and present clients know that Marg’s team goes above and beyond for each of them.

If you are going through a life change, the McCarthy Realty Team is here to ease your burden. Whether your next move is exciting or difficult, we will ensure the largest sale of your life is a positive experience backed by proven results. We work hard and attentively to continue “Improving Lives Every Day.”

Do you want to join our happy client family? Contact Marg McCarthy, Broker of Record, for a free market evaluation today at 519-925-6948. We have two locations to better serve you. Check out our featured listings at [www.mccarthyrealty.ca](http://www.mccarthyrealty.ca).



**MCCARTHY**  
— REALTY —

**110 Centennial Rd Shelburne**  
**40 Main St. W. Dundalk**  
**519-925-6948**  
**info@mccarthyrealty.ca**  
**mccarthyrealty.ca**



**Honeywood**  
**519-925-1534**  
**littlespetcare.com**

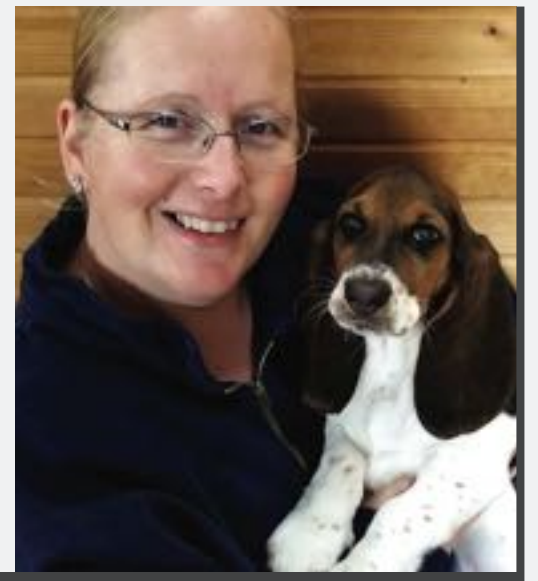
## CAROLA LITTLE – LITTLES DOG BOARDING

For the past 22 years, Carola Little has been providing award winning cageless dog boarding in the beautiful Mulmur Hills, on her 50 acre family farm. After graduating the Veterinary Technology program at Ridgetown College - University of Guelph, in 2000, Carola opened her boarding facility where the idea is to lessen the stress of boarding for dogs of all ages and sizes.

“Our idea of boarding mimics a typical living space with couches, a TV and even a fireplace. The dogs that come all have to pass a pre-screening visit with us to ensure their social ability, and are then free to enjoy a space that sounds like a home, smells like a home and feels like a home – because it is one! Outside they have an 11,000 sq ft fenced run where they can run, play, dig and bark at the birds or just lay in the grass and enjoy the peaceful country sunshine.”

For decades Carola has provided professional care for a multitude of dogs, whose smiling faces can be seen on her website at [www.littlespetcare.com](http://www.littlespetcare.com). If this sounds like something you would like to consider for your next boarding need, email Carola and set up a pre-screening appointment. This allows you to check out the facility and chat about your dogs needs. All bookings are by appointment only, and the pre screening process is selective, which allows you peace of mind when leaving your fur baby in Carola’s care, knowing those boarded are social, healthy and well loved.

“I have come to the point now where I’m leaning into semi retirement, but it’s hard for me to turn away from a business that has become such an integral part of who I am. It brings me such joy and satisfaction to offer a home away from home to my clients, most of whom I’ve known their entire lives. I have a feeling I have a few more decades ahead of me and that’s ok. I guess that’s what happens when you truly love what you do.”



## JAMIE-LEE HIGGINSON – HIGGINSON TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES

During the COVID years, Jamie-Lee Higginson saw this downtime as a chance to reset, learn something new, and move in a different direction professionally. As a Certified Authorized Transcriptionist, Jamie-Lee meets the highest of standards set by Ontario’s Ministry of the Attorney General, ensuring every transcript she produces is of the highest quality.

Jamie-Lee first began doing court transcriptions back in 2005 but later stepped away to raise her family and pursue another career. After facing some personal challenges in recent years, she upgraded her qualifications to meet today’s standards and successfully transitioned back into the field.

Returning to the profession felt natural, she says, and she quickly adapted to the updated requirements. She mentors new ACTs and has a network of trustworthy sub-contractors working for her.

Jamie-Lee is qualified to transcribe a wide range of legal (and non legal) matters. Her work includes cases heard in Provincial Court, the Ontario Court of Justice, and the Superior Court of Justice. She also

prepares transcripts for discoveries, Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) hearings, 9-1-1 calls, police interviews, and many other types of audio/video file transcription.

Based in Melancthon, Jamie-Lee is authorized to produce transcripts for all Ontario judicial jurisdictions.

She enjoys being self-employed, especially the flexibility it gives her to set her own schedule and balance work with life’s demands, although the business does run 24/7, 365 days a year.

In addition to running her transcription business, Jamie-Lee also serves as Operations Manager for her family trucking company, Higginson Motor Freight, is a mother of two, and has a little hobby farm. She also races snowcross, which has been a new and exciting endeavour.

Despite her busy schedule, she believes it’s never too late to try something new – and she continues to embrace every opportunity to share her knowledge with mentorship and leadership.



**Melancthon**  
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## MAIN STREET CAFE

**149 Main Street West,**  
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**519-925-1991**  
**shelburnemainstreetcafe@gmail.com**

## JOANNE FERRIER – MAIN STREET CAFE

Main Street cafe has been a Restaurant in downtown Shelburne for many years. In the early 1990s, locals knew it as “Shelburne’s Friendly Cafe.” Today, under the leadership of owner Joanne Ferrier, that legacy of hospitality is thriving.

Joanne took the reins of Main Street Cafe in November 2019, fulfilling a lifelong passion for catering and hospitality. She couldn’t have known that just four months later, a global pandemic would shutter dining rooms across the country.

“I’ll admit, those first couple of years were both challenging and worrisome,” Joanne reflects. But, she saw an opportunity to adapt. To sustain the business, she leaned into the community’s needs, launching a Roast Beef Dinner served on the first Friday of the month and adding new menu items along with some catering for smaller functions.

While the cafe remains a local hot spot for its all-day breakfast, Joanne has spent her tenure expanding the brand’s identity. The “new” Main Street Cafe now boasts a robust lunch lineup featuring homemade burgers, fries, signature clubhouses, and a variety of catering services. For Joanne, the business is about more than just the bottom line; it’s about the relationships forged over the counter. From greeting repeat tourists every summer to watching local families grow year after year, the reward has been deeply personal.

“I love this community,” Joanne says. “Forging these friendships has been incredibly rewarding, not just for me, but for my entire team of staff members. We aren’t just serving food; we’re part of people’s lives.”

As Shelburne continues to grow, Main Street Cafe stands as a testament to what happens when a woman in business combines passion with the grit to pivot. Whether you’re in for the nostalgia of the 90s or a burger today, Joanne Ferrier has ensured there will always be a seat at the table.



# SPORTS

## Centre Dufferin girls hockey team defeats Westside in District 4 semi-finals

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

It was a game that had to go into overtime to decide a winner and provided an exciting day for both players and fans when the Centre Dufferin District High Schools (CDDHS) Royals met the Westside Secondary School Thunder from Orangeville in their District 4 semi-final play-off game on Monday, Feb. 23.

Centre Dufferin came to the semi-final as the top-seeded team after finishing first in the District standings with an 8-2-2 record.

Westside finished in fourth place in the standings with a 3-7-2 record.

District 4 girls' hockey is played as a series of tournament days at different venues in different towns. On tournament days, each team plays three games.

The semi-final game got underway at 12 p.m., with many fans in the stands.

Westside opened the scoring with the first goal.

Centre Dufferin tied it up in the second period to make it a 1-1 game.

The Royals went ahead on a breakaway and a goal to take the lead, then followed up with another goal to make it a 3-1 game heading into the second period.

It was the third period that really turned the game around when Westside scored to close the gap.

The Thunder scored again with 3:07 remaining in the third period to tie the game at three.

Westside got a penalty, and the Royals went on the power play with a wild effort to get the lead with only a couple of minutes left on the clock.

When the buzzer sounded to end the third period, the game was still tied, and the game went into a regulation ten-minute overtime period.

The Royals scored at 1:48 into the four-



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

**PLAYOFF BATTLE:** The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals girls' hockey team take on Westside Secondary School from Orangeville in their District 4 semi-final game on Monday, Feb. 23. It was a fast-paced game between two really good teams. The game was tied at the end of the third period, forcing overtime. The Royals scored in overtime for a 4-3 win and will now compete for the District 4 championship against Erin District High School.

on-four OT period to win the game 4-3 and earn the right to advance to the District championship.

"It was a rough game, and it was a tie so it was pretty scary, but we came back and put ourselves together," summed up Royals forward Jaycee Aikins after the game. "The four-on-four (overtime) made me even more nervous because there was so much more space on the ice. We got the

puck back, went down and scored."

Teammate Brook Baird, who plays left wing, said she thought her team played a solid game during the semi-final match-up.

"I thought we played well. We don't always play great against Westside, but I think the powerplays helped us," Brook said. "We did well on dumping on the puck and chasing it, and crashing the net. I think crashing the net really helped out because

that goalie is pretty good and you just need to get in front of the net and shovel."

In the other District 4 girls' hockey semi-final, Erin District High School defeated Wellington Heights Secondary School 2-1.

Erin finished second in the regular season with a 7-4-1 record.

This sets up the top two teams in District 4 for this year's championship game.

## CDDHS Royals girls' varsity hockey team compete for District 4 championship

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals girls' varsity hockey team competed for the District 4 championship on Thursday, Feb. 26.

In the final, the Royals were up against the Erin District High School Raiders at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex in Shelburne.

The Royals finished in first place in the regular season with an 8-2-2 record.

They dispatched the Westside Secondary School Thunder in the semi-final round of the playoffs.

Erin finished in second place with a 7-4-1 record, setting up the final match between the two top teams in the District.

The Erin team reached the playoffs after knocking out Wellington Heights Secondary School in the semi-final.

The Royals opened the scoring in the championship game with a goal in the first period.

Erin tied it up with 4:34 left on the clock, then went ahead with a goal late in the period to take a 2-1 lead.

The Raiders scored the only goal in the second period to lead 3-1 with one frame

remaining.

Both teams were getting chances in the third period, but some hot goaltending stopped both teams from putting the puck in the back of the net.

The Royals put up a good effort in the third period, trying to get back into the game and tie it. However, they couldn't score.

Erin won the game 3-1 to claim the District title.

"I think Erin out-played us, we were not first to the puck," summed up Royals Centre Addi Horner after the game. "They came at us right from the start, and we didn't start on time today."

Horner added, "On offence we had a lot of chances. Our passing was good, but their goalie played really good. On defence we did good on back-checking and getting back."

The Royals were disappointed at the loss, but at the same time, took pride in a well-played season.

"Our season was great," Addi said. "We finished first in the season, just not in the finals."

The Erin team will now compete in the regional CWOSSA competition.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

**PLAYOFF BATTLE:** The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals girls' varsity hockey team competed for the District 4 championship at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex on Thursday, Feb. 26, against the Erin District High School Raiders. The Royals finished in first place in the District 4 standings, but had to settle for a 3-1 loss in the final game.

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**ATHLETE OF THE WEEK**

**LINCOLN LANNIGAN**

Centre Dufferin District High School point guard Lincoln Lannigan has been playing basketball since he was ten years old, and really enjoys the sport.

"I really like how it's fast paced and takes a long time for the final score to happen," Lincoln said of why he likes the sport. "You need the team to win your games, so I like how you have to pass the ball around – it's not a solo effort."

Lincoln plans on playing the sport for the rest of his high school career.

**TEAM: CENTRE DUFFERIN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL ROYALS JUNIOR BASKETBALL**  
**POSITION: POINT GUARD**



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTOS

**SUCCESSFUL SEASON:** The Orangeville District Secondary School Nordic Ski team has had a successful season, winning at the regional CWOSSA competition on Feb. 9, in Warton, and competing provincially at OFSAA in Orillia on Feb. 24 - 25, with good results. The ODSS Nordic Ski had 28 eight skiers in competition this year.





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# Black Parent Council says racism continues, UGDSB ignoring concerns

Written By ROBIN GEORGE

Black parents say Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) officials may talk the talk about anti-racism, but they are not walking the walk.

And they say that contradiction will endure until Black students are safe.

About 30 students, parents and teachers from Wellington, Guelph and Dufferin filled the board's gallery on Feb. 24.

Most were members of the UGDSB Black Parent Council, a volunteer advocacy group there to delegate about anti-Black racism. It was their second attempt to delegate – their first was denied last May.

Delegates Dr. Marsha Myrie Obi and Nia James said the Black Parents Council has attempted to address anti-Black racism with the board but has been largely ignored.

Mothers have an instinct to protect their children, and they resist that daily to send their kids to school at the Upper Grand, Myrie Obi said.

UGDSB director Peter Sovran, chair Ralf Mesenbrink and human rights advisor Alicia Ralph would not speak with the newspaper about the issue.

Instead, communications lead Heather Loney emailed a statement.

"The UGDSB has taken tangible actions to address anti-Black racism," she said. Loney added that this includes supporting Black students, hiring third-party consultants to develop localized anti-racism action plans, launching an Afrocentric English course, implementing identity-based harm reporting tools, completing audits, hiring a human rights advisor and asking the ministry for a graduation coach for Black students.

But parents say those steps aren't producing tangible results.

Board officials met with the council once, James said, and parents were promised next steps, including quarterly meetings.

But the Rockwood parent said the board cancelled the follow-up meeting and ignored the council's attempts to reschedule.

"That silence speaks louder than any Black Heritage Month statement," said James. "It mirrors exactly what Black families experience when any concerns are raised inside your schools."

Myrie Obi, a UGDSB parent and University of Guelph political science professor, said the council is "growing daily because parents are searching for protection."

The board would not provide examples of how harm is resolved after racist incidents, but stated responses are based on accountability, restoration and learning.

letter in April that included hundreds of signatures. It said Black UGDSB students are not safe and called for an equity audit of the board.

A week after the letter was published, the board announced it would undertake an independent third-party review, without mentioning the letter or the council.

That review is now complete, and the results were set to be discussed during a committee meeting on March 3. Board officials would not share any results on March 2.

But results alone will not resolve harm, Myrie Obi said. She asked how the board protects Black students and how it measures whether its approach is working.

In an email addressed to Loney, she did not answer the newspaper's questions about how anti-Black racism initiatives are measured, but said the board has increased its data collection in recent years.

During the meeting, trustee Irene Hanenberg asked parents how to measure success.

Myrie Obi said they could help the board figure that out if officials "stop ignoring us." She added the answer deserves honour, grace, care and time, and that's why they wanted quarterly meetings.

James suggested UGDSB officials look to Peel and Halton Catholic school boards – "They could really show you exactly how," James said.

"That silence speaks louder than any Black Heritage Month statement ... It mirrors exactly what Black families experience when any concerns are raised inside your schools."

Nia James

The trustees had no further questions, and the delegates left.

Increased awareness

Nyasha Ward and James, who each have two daughters in Upper Grand schools, sat down for an interview following the delegation.

Ward, a UGDSB Black Parent Council member from Rockwood, said, "It was powerful how many people were in that room, especially the children," as it shows families are impacted.

James doesn't have much hope for change from the board, but said the increased awareness is important.

"Our group is growing ... and that's what's going to keep happening, until there is ac-



ROBIN GEORGE PHOTO

**GROWING CONCERN:** Nia James, far right, and Dr. Marsha Myrie Obi, second from right, delegated to the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) on Feb. 24. They said their children are not safe at school and their pleas for help are being ignored.

countability," she said.

And the more eyes on the board, the more careful people will be, she said. That won't stop people from being racist, but it will make them hide it, "and that's fine, because it keeps the children safe," she said.

James expressed deep appreciation for the teachers who attended the meeting.

Black Parent Council

At its core, the council is "a group of parents who are trying to keep their kids safe in an educational system that isn't designed for them," Myrie Obi said.

She said the council creates "a place where we find strength and common language" and they're building awareness that racism is not just individual incidents but part of a systemic pattern.

There are about 20 core members with others who come and go, Myrie Obi said, as they're encouraged to participate however they're able.

"I don't understand why the board is so reluctant and resistant to speak to the Black parents and really support the work we are doing, because at the end of the day it helps them to do better," she said.

The group is building other partnerships, including with local organizations and Black parent groups across Ontario, and is preparing "to take our advocacy to the next level," including through legal routes, Myrie Obi said.

"I am so amazingly disappointed with the UGDSB," she said, adding, "I feel as though the board believes it is accountable to no one."

She added, "You cannot claim progress

without demonstrating impact. You cannot declare equity while disengaging from the very community experiencing inequity."

She said being part of the UGDSB Black Parent Council gives her hope, as she's part of the solution instead of "just sitting back and accepting that I have to send my child to a school every day where he is going to be unsafe."

Myrie Obi said there are no quick fixes, and the board needs to release the human rights report and follow its recommendations.

"The only time I am going to stop is when I actually see real, tangible change," she said.

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We're decking the halls once again and inviting unique, passionate vendors to join us in making HollyFest even more magical in its second year. After an incredible inaugural event, we're excited to welcome new businesses and continue growing Orangeville Citizen's signature holiday shopping experience.

If you're ready to showcase your products, connect with an engaged community, join a festive tradition in the making, we'd love to have you at HollyFest and share in the magic!!

**Saturday, November 21, 2026 - 9am to 4pm; and  
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To apply to be a vendor at the show, scan the QR code, visit our website or email [shows@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:shows@lpcmedia.ca) for a vendor application form. Apply before June 1, 2026 and be eligible for early acceptance on June 26.

# Don't wait for the water: Take flood prevention measures and stay safe

Floods can wreak havoc on homes, causing extensive damage to infrastructure and personal belongings and posing significant risks to safety.

With warmer, wetter weather in the forecast, Dufferin County is reminding residents about the flood prevention measures they can take to protect their homes and families and what to do if a flood happens.

"Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Canada and floods can happen anywhere, at any time of year, to anyone," said Steven Murphy, manager of 911 and preparedness at Dufferin County.

"A changing climate brings more frequent and intense rainfall events, elevating the risk of flooding in our region," said Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy at Dufferin County. "By knowing the risks and taking steps to prepare, residents can minimize damage, protect their belongings and ensure the safety of their families."

## Prevent a flood

The average basement flood costs \$43,000 to repair. But home protection is easier than you think and you can take basic flood prevention measures for any budget:

- \$0 – Maintain what you have at least twice per year. Remove debris inside and outside your home, test your sump pump, ensure you have a battery back-up and maintain your backwater valve.
- Under \$250 – By tackling some do-it-yourself projects, you can complete simple updates to your home to keep it safe. Install window well covers, disconnect and

extend downspouts, install a flood alarm and install a rain barrel.

• Over \$250 – A contractor can help you with some larger or more complex projects that will help you lower your flood risk. Install window wells, correct grading, install a backwater valve, install backup sump pump power source and consider replacing traditional grass lawn with a rain garden.

For more information and to access valuable flood protection resources, visit [dufferincounty.ca/floodprotection](http://dufferincounty.ca/floodprotection)

## Prepare for a flood

Even with flood prevention measures in place, you should be ready and able to respond quickly during a flood event. There are easy steps you can take to ensure you are ready for potential flooding:

- Ask your insurance provider about water damage coverage. In many cases, flood damage is not covered by insurance. Speak with your broker and review your insurance policy carefully.
  - Store your valuables and hazardous materials in watertight containers. Heating fuel like bulk propane or oil should be secured. Gas cans should be stored low, on the ground and in an outbuilding.
  - Make and practice a family emergency plan so that everyone knows what to do and where to go in case of a flooding emergency.
  - Prepare an emergency kit so that you and your family are self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.
- If flooding does occur, residents are asked to:



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**PREVENT AND PREPARE:** The County of Dufferin is encouraging residents to take flood prevention measures to protect their homes and families if flooding occurs.

- Stay updated. Monitor local weather forecasts and emergency alerts. Seek information from trusted sources including the local municipalities and the Ontario Provincial Police. For road closure information visit [Municipal511](http://Municipal511).
  - Avoid flooded areas. Never drive or walk through flooded streets or water-covered areas. Flood waters can rise rapidly, making them unsafe.
- There are five different watersheds in Dufferin County. Each Conservation Au-

thority has a role in flood prevention and monitoring. You can learn more by visiting the Conservation Authorities' websites, which can be found on Dufferin's website at [www.dufferincounty.ca](http://www.dufferincounty.ca).

"Always stay vigilant and follow the guidance of local officials, and take proactive steps to protect your home and loved ones," reads a press release from the County of Dufferin. "Together, we can keep our community safe by being prepared and remaining informed."

# Police warn residents of increase in CRA-themed scams throughout tax season

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

As Canadians begin preparing their 2026 income tax returns, the Ontario Provincial Police are reminding the public to stay vigilant against Canada Revenue Agency impersonation scams.

This includes phishing emails and text messages designed to steal personal and financial information.

According to the Canada Revenue Agency, scammers frequently impersonate CRA employees and may contact victims by phone, email, text message, or through fake websites that appear official.

The CRA confirms that it will never send refunds by e-transfer for text message, request personal or financial information by email or voicemail, or pressure you to click links to receive benefits or avoid penalties.

The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre continues to receive high volumes of reports involving tax-related fraud. It notes that fraudsters increasingly use phishing messages, spoofed caller ID numbers, and official-looking CRA

branding to trick victims into sharing sensitive information.

The CAFCC stresses that it does not contact individuals to request money or personal information, and encourages all Canadians to report suspicious activity.

There are several common tactics used in CRA scams.

Residents should be cautious if they receive:

Emails or text messages with links urging you to 'claim your refund,' 'update your tax account,' or 'avoid account suspension.' Scammers often use threats or promises of refunds to pressure victims into clicking fraudulent links.

Phone calls demanding immediate payment or threatening arrest, deportation, or legal action are used to intimidate victims. The CRA states it will never threaten arrest or use aggressive language.

Fake websites imitating CRA long pages, often using unusual domain endings or extra characters, are used to dupe victims. Official CRA sites always start with [canada.ca](http://canada.ca) or end



in .gc.ca.

You may be dealing with a scam if someone sends you a link and asks you to click it, or requests personal details such as your SIN, banking information, or passport number.

Be aware if someone asks for payment by cryptocurrency, gift cards, or e-transfer. CAA does not accept these transactions.

If you are unsure if you are being scammed, hang up, delete the message, and contact CRA yourself.

If you believe you have been targeted by a CRA-related scam, whether or not you shared personal information, you are urged to report the matter.

Reporting helps law enforcement identify patterns and prevent further victimization.

## Next exit: Making the meeting

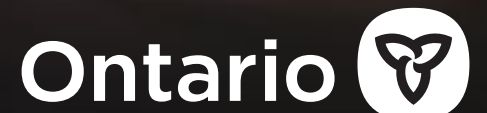
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Please send your resume to Michele Fisher, Executive Director, [michele@dufferincommunityfoundation.ca](mailto:michele@dufferincommunityfoundation.ca).

Application Deadline: Friday, March 20, 2026 at 5:00 pm



**DUFFERIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

## OBITUARIES

### In Loving Memory of PATRICIA "PAT" IRWIN



Passed away peacefully at Shelburne Residence on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at the age of 93.

Loving wife of the late Willis Irwin. Loved mother of Ruth, Ron, Diane (Don) Craig and Darlene. Proud grandma of Dylan, Dan (Alice) and Corby and great-grandma of Clara. Predeceased by her daughter-in-law April, son-in-law Doug, granddaughter Amelia and brother-in-law Fallis. Pat will be fondly remembered by her many friends and neighbours over the years.

Pat was born and raised in Melancthon Township. She obtained her teacher's degree and taught for a few years before marrying and starting a family. She lived on the farm on the 2nd Line of Mulmur for 30 years before moving into Shelburne. She was involved in the church, community and volunteer events. Pat also enjoyed square dancing, cards, the annual Fiddle Contest, jamborees and Sunday church services. She was an avid Blue Jays fan and a lover of cats.

Friends and family were received at the Jack & Thompson Funeral Home on Saturday, February 28, 2026 from 12-1 p.m. The funeral service followed in the Funeral Home chapel at 1:00 p.m. Spring interment at Shelburne Cemetery. If desired, donations to Trinity Primrose United Church or the Heart & Stroke Foundation would be appreciated as expressions of sympathy. Online condolences and donations may be placed at [www.jackandthompsonfuneralhome.com](http://www.jackandthompsonfuneralhome.com).

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**NO FRILLS, 101 2nd Line RR 1, Shelburne** (by the mailboxes)

**First Ave West** (by train tracks/ new condo mailboxes)

**Royal LePage RCR Realty, 126 Main Street East, Shelburne**

**Hornings Mills** (by the Community Centre)

**Dean Road, Mulmur** (by news boxes)

**Shelburne Canadian Legion** (front entrance on 2nd Ave.)

**Superburger, 506269 ON-89, Shelburne** (Corner of Hwy 89 and 10)

**Town Hall, 203 Main St E, Shelburne** (inside Town Hall)

**Trillium Ford, 506168 ON-89, Mono**

**CDRC, 200 Fiddle Park Lane, Shelburne** (Box inside lobby)

**Foodland, 824 Ojibway Rd, Shelburne**

**Caravaggio, 128 Main St E, Shelburne**

**Autocare Plus, 710C Industrial Rd, Shelburne**

**Roys Service, 635202 ON-10, Mono**

**Dynes Senior Building, 301 First Ave E, Shelburne**

**Town Milk & Variety, 516 Main St E, Shelburne** (near New Orleans Pizza)

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# Orangeville SPCA rolls out the Neuter Scooter, offering free surgeries

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Ontario SPCA's Mobile Neuter Scooter program in Orangeville marked World Spay Day Tuesday, Feb. 24, with a focused push to tackle pet overpopulation and improve access to veterinary care for local families.

World Spay Day is designed to raise awareness of the consequences of unchecked pet populations, including overcrowded shelters and more animals living on the streets.

Shannon Bury, community outreach coordinator for the Ontario SPCA Orangeville Animal Centre, said the mobile clinic is an important tool for accessibility in the region.

"This initiative focuses on underserved communities and helps families access spay and neuter services that they may not have otherwise had access to," she said. "This helps to reduce pet overpopulation in the province. It's an important way to reach underserved communities that otherwise wouldn't have access to the veterinarian care that is offered through static clinics."

Rising demand for spay and neuter services, combined with an ongoing veterinarian shortage and the surge in pet ownership stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, has made programs like the Neuter Scooter

increasingly important.

Appointments for these services typically fill within minutes when bookings open, underscoring the scale of the need.

The Neuter Scooter program in Orangeville operates on the second Wednesday of every month, offering surgeries at a reduced cost and, on special occasions like World Spay Day, at no cost to eligible pet owners.

"Across the organization, we were able to offer 227 free spay and neuter surgeries for both cats and dogs across the Ontario SPCA and humane society," Bury said. "Then in Orangeville specifically, we were able to offer 15 free spay and neuter surgeries."

Public reception to the mobile clinic has been positive, particularly among those who face financial or geographic barriers to veterinary care.

"Across the province, the SPCA has received very good reviews and feedback on it and has been able to help so many people that otherwise wouldn't have access to this care," Bury said. "For Orangeville, specifically, it is a bit of a newer program, so we are still getting things off the ground, but for the people who have been involved in the Orangeville clinics have expressed, like, a lot of gratitude and a lot of high impact from the surgeries being offered."

While the Orangeville program is still rel-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**ON THE ROAD:** In Orangeville, the SPCA's mobile clinic facilitated 15 spays and neuters, out of a total capacity of 20. Despite being a relatively new program, local visitors have spoken highly of the mobile service, saying it gives them much greater access to critical services they previously could not use.

atively new and still establishing its reputation, participants have expressed strong appreciation for the support and relief it provides.

Overall, the Neuter Scooter is emerging as a key tool in reducing unplanned litters, easing pressure on shelters, and helping families keep their pets healthy and at home.

# adopt a cat

Diana is our absolute stunning 8 year old long-haired princess. She was brought to FCR to socialize and in the past two years we have seen her come out of her shell. She is a peaceful girl who would prefer a quiet home. She gets along well with other cats and can co-habit with dogs without issue. She truly wants a home where she can receive pets and lounge in a warm bed.

Adoption fee is \$275. She is spayed, microchipped, vaccinated, dewormed and flea treated.

Check our facebook page to see the other kitties looking for their forever home. Donations always needed to help care for the cats as we are not funded at all, and rely on donations and fundraisers. If you would like to volunteer as well we are always appreciative.

Diana

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## Shelburne Public Library highlights the power of short stories, shares staff pick of the week

Do you ever read short stories?

Short stories possess a unique power through their brevity, delivering intense emotional experiences, profound insights, and focused narratives that can be consumed in a single sitting.

Immersive and accessible, short stories, like all great literature, encourage reflection, enhance empathy, and sharpen analytical skills.

This week's staff pick comes from our CEO Shannon and is one of the best short stories she has read.

### Staff pick of the week

*Fox 8* by George Saunders, illustrated by Chelsea Cardinal, is the Shelburne Public Library's staff pick of the week.

The book's protagonist, Fox 8, has always been known as the daydreamer in his pack, the one his fellow foxes regard with a knowing snort and a roll of the eyes. That is until he develops a unique skill: He teaches himself to speak "Yuman" by hiding in the bushes outside a house and listening to children's bedtime stories.

The power of language fuels his abundant curiosity about people — even after "danjer" arrives in the form of a new shopping mall that cuts off his food supply, sending Fox 8 on a harrowing quest to help save his pack.

**Why Shannon recommends it:** I read this powerful short story in one sitting, and I was fully immersed. In just fifty pages, Saunders had me laughing, tearing up, feeling angry, and then hopeful. His ability to invoke both humour and pathos, while illuminating the darker side of humanity (specifically our quest to tame nature) all from the unique yet somehow relatable perspective of a fox, left me in awe of his talent and creativity. Fox 8 is a great example of the power of a short story and the illustrations throughout are an extra special touch.

If you would like to read Fox 8, let your library know and we will borrow it via our Interlibrary Loan program.

*This article was written by the Shelburne Public Library staff.*

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