NEWS

THRIFT STORE OFFERS 'SECOND CHANCE' AT COMMUNITY LIFE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF NIPISSING ROAD STORE/COMMUNITY SPACE THIS FRIDAY

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The Corner Thrift Store is located at 100 Nipissing Rd., Unit 3.

More than just a second-hand store, the new Corner Thrift Store in Milton is also a space for the community to get together.

"It's about creating space for people to be in the community where they can support each other," John Bouwers, pastor of Crosstowne Church, said of the idea behind the local enterprise.

He said people from all walks of life, including those in the lower end of the economic scale, can come and shop where prices will be low. In addition, volunteers - especially seniors - can find and build relationships by working at the thrift store.

Bouwers acknowledges the need to address the problem of economic poverty, but there's also the issue of relationship poverty.

"I think poverty is never just about money. It's a holistic reality," he said. "Isolation is such a challenge and things like hopelessness and the thinking that 'I don't have a purpose' - that kind of thinking rises when you don't have a chance to give and be part of something more than yourself."

According to volunteer and pastor-in-training Courtney Saldivar, the store, which offers a seating area and a hot brew of coffee daily, is an extension of the services that the church has provided over the years.

"It helps the church support things that we're already doing in the community," she said, including their recent annual winter coat drive to collect and giveaway winter jackets to community members.

While the official grand opening is set for Nov. 15, the store has been running for a couple of weeks.

"It's been a good response so far," she said. "The more word of mouth gets out, the more people we see coming - kind of slow and steady."

As for what's in the store, Bouwers said they rely on the generosity of others to donate clothing and household items - a kind gesture that they plan to return by reinvesting some of the proceeds back into the community, as there are some costs involved in running the non-profit.

His hope is that they can support other local organizations in Milton that are providing essential services for people in need.

And on top of the recycling aspect, where donating consumer products means they won't end up in a landfill and can be of use to others, the Corner Thrift Store is ultimately about giving people "a second chance at community life."

"There's a lot of people that are isolated and just looking for another chance to have friendship or a place to go and to serve," he said.

THE ISSUE
ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE SECOND-HAND ITEMS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY

LOCAL IMPACT: **THE STORE HOPES TO HELP ADDRESS BOTH ECONOMIC AND RELATIONSHIP POVERTY**

STORY BEHIND THE STORY

After hearing about the opening of the thrift store/community space, we contacted those involved to learn more about their goals.

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