

Young women's leadership council hosts IWD event

7 | Friday, March 6, 2015 | OAKVILLE BEAVER | www.insideHALTON.com

by Nathan Howes
Special to the Beaver

Students should be the best they can be and persevere through any obstacles they face while pursuing their dreams.

That's according to Captain R. Wilson Public School principal Alka Sahai, who shared her important lessons for others as part of a keynote address she gave at Abbey Park High School's (APHS) fourth annual International Women's Day Breakfast Wednesday.

The event was organized by APHS' Young Women in Leadership Council to mark International Women's Day on Sunday (March 8), which celebrates the achievements of women while calling for greater equality.

"You have created roots, a strong foundation for the future and have done a marvelous job with your children. Results and benefits from our education system may not be immediately visible," said Sahai, who was recently named one of Canada's outstanding principals for 2015.

"While some children respond almost instantly, others may need the full 10 years in elementary school or more to fully benefit."

Sahai shared the story of a farmer in a rural community looking to grow a different crop that others wouldn't touch — bamboo.

"Upon telling his fellow farmers of his idea, they mocked him, calling him foolish all the time, warning him of his impending peril. They were unwilling to accept change or progress,"

said Sahai. "However, the farmer was unshaken. He was confident of his knowledge."

During the first year of planting, nothing happened, she said, as he didn't get so much as a "twig or a leaf," noting his neighbours were ruthless, but he continued.

The third year the bamboo was everywhere and "grew a foot a day," Sahai said, adding he harvested and sold his crop for a large profit.

"Several, who had once ridiculed him, began to show interest in becoming bamboo farmers as well. The farmer went on for many years, enjoying the benefits of his new crop," said Sahai.

The story is special to Sahai, she said, as it provides important lessons to students and those who support their children.

The first is that knowledge gives you confidence to pursue your dreams and goals, "regardless of what others think."

For parents and family, Sahai said its deeper message is "just because you don't see immediate progress (with your children), it doesn't mean there hasn't been any growth."

"The reason the bamboo tree doesn't grow until the third season is because it spends the first two years growing roots, building a foundation, so that when it is ready to grow, it will have the stability to stand tall, reaching tall heights," she noted. "We must be patient, have confidence and persevere like the bamboo farmer."

Sahai's address was followed by a question-and-answer period with four speakers. That panel included Sahai; Ward 2 Town Council-

lor Pam Damoff; Emma Mogus, co-founder of Books With No Bounds; and certified financial planner Sheila Hill.

When asked what the most important skill is for a woman, Damoff said, "It's to believe in yourself and respect others," whether you're a man or woman.

"As long as you believe in what you're doing, stay true to your values, keep your eye on where you're going and don't let things distract you, you can do anything you want," said Damoff.

Emma founded Oakville charity Books With No Bounds (BWNB) with her sister, Julia, in 2011, and they've shipped thousands of books, crafts, school supplies, computer tablets, clothing and other items to First Nation communities and other municipalities in Canada and abroad.

What inspired the Mogus sisters to start BWNB was a "desire to create change and a passion for reading," Emma said, noting they started reading young as they didn't own a television.

"Our parents are very supportive of this and very supportive of the fact that you have to always try to help somebody else. If you see that somebody has something or they lack some-

thing that you love, you have to immediately try to change that," said Emma.

"With Books With No Bounds, the ultimate inspiration came from James Bartleman's book drive. He was the first Aboriginal Lieutenant Governor and he said that his ticket out of a life of poverty was reading."

Hill is a certified financial planner specializing in educating women on financial stability and planning.

As for balancing her personal and professional life, Hill said, "I'm not entirely sure I have it all figured out yet. I'm really working on trying to create balance in my life. The two things I do that are sort of my own gospel is that I go to the gym regularly and I eat dinners at the kitchen table with my children every single night."

Questioned how Oakville residents can collectively support women subjected to abuse, Sahai said awareness is key, as the topic becomes more openly discussed.

"I think we need to know what the facts are. We need to educate our women so that they are able to take more action into helping the situation and standing up for the cause."



ANGELA MARKUSIC
Sales Representative



309 Lakeshore Road East Unit A
Oakville, Ontario L6J1J3
905-338-9000

ROB JAIME
CIBC Residential Mortgage Advisor



Telephone: (905) 510-9125
Fax: 1 (888) 885-0322
Email: rob.jaime@cibc.com



Invite you to a FREE REAL ESTATE MEET & GREET

CIBC Maple Grove Plaza 5-511 Maple Grove Dr,
Oakville, ON L6J 6X8 10:30am – 12:30pm

If you are thinking of buying or selling a home this is a great opportunity
to come out and meet us and ask any questions!

Come in for Pre Approval Mortgage appointments with Rob Jaime CIBC Mortgage Advisor.

We look forward to seeing you on **Saturday, March 7th, 2015.**

Create your dream

Kitchen or Bathroom!



20 Years
Experience

FREE INSTALLATION

SOME EXCEPTIONS, PLEASE VISIT SHOWROOM FOR DETAILS. OFFER EXPIRES MARCH 31, 2015



333 Wyecroft Rd., Free Estimates
Unit 3, Oakville **905.844.3332**

www.aromakitchens.ca

The Body Shaping Fitness Studio For Women

We are so confident that
you will **LOVE** it here that
we are offering you a

**1 WEEK FREE
MEMBERSHIP**

no obligation, all classes included.



IDEAL PROTEIN CLINIC

Ideal Protein... a Quick,
Healthy & Fun weight loss
program for **Men and Women!**
No exercise required! Largest
product selection in Oakville!
No Consultation or Weigh in Fees!



183 Lakeshore Road W., Oakville | 905.849.1919 | www.bodyshapingstudio.com

