

Program has women helping peers

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

Being paired with a peer supporter was like being thrown a lifeline for an Acton woman who is separated from her husband, having financial troubles and being judged and told what to do by well-meaning family and friends.

The woman, we'll call her Rachel, was at her wits' end when a friend suggested she get in touch with the Double Jeopardy Peer Support Program at the Women's Centre Of Halton.

"It was the best thing that has happened to me," Rachel explains. "I had a marriage-from-hell and in-laws-from-hell and I needed a neutral

person to talk to who had been where I was and who would not judge me or tell me what to do."

The Peer Support Program began after a needs assessment in Halton found 91 per cent of women surveyed said speaking to other women who had similar experiences was the best way to handle stress.

Susan Coyne, the Double Jeopardy Co-ordinator, says there was a special need for some sort of network to be in place to connect women.

"Friends can get tired of hearing about their friends' problems all of the time and professional help isn't always appropriate and can be expensive," Coyne explains.

"We provide peer supporters with 30 hours of training and then match them with another woman who is going through a rough time and needs someone to talk to."

The peer supporters act as sounding boards. They provide emotional support and can link their peer to appropriate community services. Besides separation and divorce, some of the stress peers may face include single parenting, abuse, life-threatening illness and job loss.

Rachel's peer supporter, we'll call her Angela, says she wishes there had been a program like this when she was going through her separation and divorce.

"I also had a bad marriage and money troubles and after a while my family and friends didn't want to hear about my troubles all the time, so I had to work a lot of it out by myself," Angela explains.

"Sometimes you just need to vent with someone who is interested but not completely involved and that's what this program is all about."

The Double Jeopardy Peer Support Program is looking for women to act as peer supporters in the Acton area. The next 30-hour training program was scheduled to begin yesterday (Tuesday) but it is not too late if you're interested. For more details, call Coyne at 905-847-617.



HAPPY 40TH!

Grace and Len Graham of Elmore Drive celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary last Sunday with an open house at their home. (Jennifer Flesch photo)

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Upstairs, a deluxe master bedroom features a walk-in closet and a 4 piece ensuite with a swirl tub.

Plans for AT-016-00B may be obtained for \$440 for five complete sets of working prints and \$39 for each additional set. Allow \$15 to cover the cost of postage and handling (add 7% GST to plan total plus postage and handling). Please make cheques, money orders, Visa or Master-Card authorizations payable to Acton Tanner HomePlan of the Week, P.O. Box 150, Acton, ON, L7J 2M3.

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Meals on Wheels Week

ASSIC ALERT

ered by 36 caring volunteers.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our dedicated volunteers who deliver meals through the year, and take the time to say a friendly word to those receiving meals. Your contribution is greatly appreciated!

The cost of Meals on Wheels is \$3.50 each day.

To order meals, or to volunteer as a driver/runner, please call June at ASSIC, 853-3310.

The week of October 1 to 6 has been designated as Meals on Wheels Week in Ontario.

ASSIC offers a Meals on Wheels program, where seniors and the disabled, as well as those unable to prepare a meal due to health reasons, can have a meal delivered to their door daily (Monday to Friday) by our volunteers.

Last year 40 clients received 3,430 meals, deliv-

THANKS

My pilgrimage will not end so long as I live. I know I shall live for as long as life is given me. I will live as I can, enjoying what I might, and being what I may to the people I love.

A heartfelt thanks to all who have made my first year of business, in Rockwood an amazing experience. Your support and trust has been the most wonderful gift to receive. The training, education and enlightenment has been an incredible journey. I wish you all peace, happiness and good health.

With love,
Teressa Gibson Smye
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