

JOIN THE RUBY CAMPAIGN

INITIATIVE AIMS TO PUT AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, WRITES BOZZO



BOZZO
Column

If you live anywhere in Halton you are probably aware that Halton Women's Place is the only women's shelter in the region.

In total, we have 52 beds available at two facilities on a daily basis. We operate at 98 to 105 per cent capacity for most of the year. These are astounding statistics.

This year, we are commemorating 40 years of service: 40 years of keeping abused women and their children safe; 40 years - 14,600 days of opening doors, answering calls, counselling, referring, supporting, empowering. We could not have done this without our community's support, generosity, dedication and advocacy.

On behalf of the thousands of women and children who have called our

shelter home, we thank you.

As we embark on 40 years serving the women and children of the region, we are inviting the community to be a part of our Ruby Campaign - a campaign to signify the future end of violence against women. The future is with our children.

Our public education and advocacy program is in high demand in classes across the region. Our educators present to students in grades 1-12 on a variety of topics, including healthy relationships, gender stereotypes, consent, dating violence and the law and so much more.

We know that the key to ending violence against women is educating our children. We need to make sure that kids living in abusive homes know that they have options, that they don't have to repeat the cycle of violence.

We also need to educate children about what a healthy relationship is to prevent unhealthy, abusive relationships to start.

However, this program is not government funded. It's a program that relies on community support. Your support.

We need this program in Halton schools now

more than ever - especially since the provincial government repealed the 2015 sexual-education curriculum, reverting back to the 1998 curriculum that didn't address critical topics like consent, healthy relationships, LGBTQ issues, same-sex marriage, cyberbullying or sexting.

Halton Women's Place is proud of the work our public education team - licensed teachers - has done in our classrooms across the region and their presentations are in high demand by educators.

For more information on our public education program, please visit www.hwpeducation.com. To support this program or any program at Halton Women's Place, call 905-332-1200 ext. 222 or email cbozzo@haltonwomensplace.com.

Invest in keeping women and children safe.

- Carm Bozzo is the development manager at Halton Women's Place.

OPINIONS

SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AT INSIDEHALTON.COM

CANCELLATION OF BASIC INCOME PILOT PUTS FAR TOO MANY AT GREATER RISK: POVERTY ROUNDTABLE

This is an open letter to MPP Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Community and Social Services

Dear Minister MacLeod,

We are writing in response to your government's decision to end the Basic Income Pilot program in Ontario. We strongly disagree with your decision to end this pilot prematurely and without regard for the demonstrably positive impact that this program was having upon the lives of people living in poverty in our province.

As such, we respectfully urge you to reconsider a policy decision that will only serve to deepen the experience of poverty for millions of Ontario's children, families and seniors.

The Halton Poverty Roundtable is a registered charity and a leader in connecting, educating and acting on issues related to poverty in Halton. In our community, one in 10 of our neighbours do not know where their next meal will come from and one in three seniors are living below the poverty line.

Our communities of Oakville, Burlington, Milton and Halton Hills have over 37,000 individuals who struggle daily to survive on low incomes or who live in poverty.

Minister MacLeod, the conclusion of the first phase of the Basic Income Pilot in April of this year, brought with it an abundance of first-hand ac-

counts of the difference that basic income had made to people's lives. The decision to abandon the pilot will cause needless difficulties for the participants struggling to escape poverty.

Given the initial success of the program, we cannot understand the immediate need for cancellation. Surely, it would have been prudent to conclude the pilot and use the resulting data in the development of social policy.

We are hopeful that your government's announcement to reform social assistance in the next 100 days includes an inclusive and transparent process, collaboration across all sectors and a fulsome consultation process including those living with the challenges of poverty.

As you may know, having a 100-day timeline to reform the entire social assistance program will be met with challenges, including the potential for increases of punitive and ineffective approaches and models being implemented, the reduction of supports under the guise of decreasing resource costs and a lack of understanding of the lived experience of being on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program.

As you embark on this reform, we would like to draw your attention to the living wage in Halton Region. In order for a family

in Halton to cover their basic living expenses, a family of four would have to have both adults working 37.5 hours per week, making \$17.95 per hour. Clearly, minimum wage, Ontario Works and ODSP do not come close to affording recipients a basic standard of living in Halton. Your government's proposed 1.5 per cent increase in social assistance will do little to assist the most vulnerable people in our communities.

The Halton Poverty Roundtable respectfully requests that the Government of Ontario continue the Basic Income Pilot program through to its conclusion before making a final decision as to the efficacy, both socially and financially, of the basic income concept.

In light of the current economic climate in Ontario, the low Canadian dollar, the ongoing trade tariff situation with the United States combined with the cost of living, this is driving uncertainty for the most vulnerable.

Bottom line: you know that it is harder for families to survive, and the cancellation of the Basic Income Pilot program and the cut to our current social assistance program puts far too many at even greater risk.

SARAH SABIHUDDIN
HALTON POVERTY ROUNDTABLE'S
DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ONLINE

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