

Alzheimer's HPE Bancroft office now open at new BCT building



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Alzheimer's Hastings Prince Edward Bancroft office is now open in the new Bancroft Community Transit building at 24 Flint Street. On June 27, BCT had a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony to commemorate the occasion. Alzheimer's HPE is renting space from BCT for their office, and they also have access to the board room. Attendees were able to come by to tour the new offices, visit with Alzheimer's HPE staff and learn about programs and volunteer opportunities. Despite the rain, the event was well attended and well received by everyone that came out.

The Alzheimer's HPE Bancroft office occupies a portion of the new BCT building that was newly opened on June 27 with a grand opening ceremony and ribbon cutting. The ceremony included speeches by Gwen Schutt Coish, director of operations for BCT, Bancroft Mayor Paul Jenkins, MP Ric Bresee, Kim Bishop (on behalf of MPP Shelby Kramp Neuman, who was unable to attend) and BCT board member Mabel Nixon McLellan. After that, there was a ribbon cutting which officially opened the new space, and then a tour of the new building and an open house so attendees could explore and ask questions of the BCT staff and the staff at Alzheimer's HPE.

The Alzheimer's Society of Hastings Prince Edward is a non-profit organization and registered charity that offers support, education, and advocacy for people and families experiencing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Their website is www.alzheimer.ca/hpe/.

The Alzheimer's HPE Bancroft office, formerly located at 1 Manor Lane is now located at 24 Flint Avenue. Its hours are Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They offer programs that include; one on one and family support, free resources and information, lending library and Music for Me program, monthly support groups, Memory Café social events and more. They can be reached at 613-332-4614 or by emailing education and support coordinator Kim Aide at kim.aide@alzheimerhpe.ca.

In addition to Aide, the staff available through the Alzheimer's HPE Bancroft office are executive director Angela Meraw, operations and program manager Sarah Bradshaw, first link care navigator Shelley Haggarty, intake coordinator Tania Kerik, education and support coordinator Ben Wright, education and support coordinator Karen Partridge, education and support coordinator Lisa Young, first link care navigator Lorainne Ross, public education coordinator Jeniece Renaud, fund development coordinator Trisha Clancy, education and support coordinator Meagan Brent, activation coordinator Alyssa Thorn and communications and IT coordinator Amelia Huffman.

Meraw said it had been a while since they'd had an office and it was nice to have such a great new space and to share it with a fellow non-profit like BCT.

?It was almost a year we were without a space because Care North Hastings was growing [at 1 Manor Lane] so we were looking for a new home. This partnership [with BCT] made sense,? she says.

Meraw says they offer free education opportunities for the community like dementia friendly communities training to reduce the stigma by educating the community.

?If an agency has 80 per cent of their staff trained, they get a decal on their window and we advertise that they're dementia friendly because they've been trained in dementia awareness, communications tips, all those things. So that's great for our clients to know too, because sometimes it makes a difference as far as feeling secure and supported when they go into a space,? she says.

Meraw says they are also looking for volunteer committee members for their annual walk to raise money and awareness about Alzheimer's and for their other events.

They also require volunteers for their in-home activation service, which was launched in January. Meraw says it is staff led but volunteer driven, and provides activation, recreation and social interaction to people living with dementia in the Bancroft area.

?So it's really about going into people's homes and providing activation supports to persons with dementia. And with that it provides care partners a bit of respite time and some in-home support. So not personal care, but activation,? she says.

Often the volunteers they get are previous care partners who are thankful for the supports they've received from Alzheimer's HPE, according to Meraw, and maybe now they have a little more time to help out and give back.

Clancy says it's great to be in a space with another non-profit like BCT, and to be able to deliver services which the community needs.

?We're happy to be here, happy to be in this space. We've got some of our biggest supporters here in Bancroft and we really want to let the folks know in Bancroft that we're so thankful for them. We feel the support and we're happy to be here,? she says.

Renaud says that they're going to be out in the community a lot providing their services, although their new hire, education and support coordinator Veronica Ladd (whose first day was June 27) will be at the office to help anyone who comes in, and will be the first face they see.

?So you guys are going to be sick of our faces. We'll be here a lot!? she says.

Meraw tells Bancroft This Week that it's so nice when community partners work together to provide supports for the community.

?We serve the community so it just made sense for us to share hubs when we can. It's been a great turnout today for sure,? she says.
?This community is so supportive.?