

Lunch and Learn focuses on overall well-being



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tudor and Cashel Township had a Lunch and Learn session on April 17 on physical and mental well-being at the Tudor and Cashel community centre. Featuring speaker Shannon Del Grosso, a health promoter with Hastings Prince Edward Public Health, attendees received information on how to get and stay physically and mentally healthy through all stages of life. DelGrosso and Councillor Elain Holloway comment on this session. Del Grosso spoke to attendees at the Tudor and Cashel Lunch and Learn on April 17 about physical and mental well-being. "Mental health and physical well being are together but they're still kind of separate. Right now, public health follows a set of standards and they're reevaluating because things change, topics change, things become more important or things aren't being addressed in the community, and mental health is definitely a big one," she says. Del Grosso spoke of the importance of physical activity, getting up and moving, whether it's walking, gardening, cycling, kayaking, housework, or any other type of activity that gets people active. She gave out a handout on tips to stay active for different age categories, which included taking part in at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each week, spreading out the activities into sessions of 10 minutes or more, and adding in muscle and bone strengthening activities at least twice a week. Del Grosso also spoke of the dangers of sedentary behaviour, sitting and not being active for extended lengths of time, which can lead to a myriad of health problems and limiting it to eight hours or less. Another handout she gave to attendees was the Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines for adults 65 years or older, which outlines a healthy 24 hours, including physical activity, seven to eight hours of sleep per night and limiting sedentary behaviour. Things that physical activity help decrease, according to Del Grosso, are; heart problems, stroke, obesity, mortality, muscle and bone density loss, diabetes, several types of cancer and falls. Del Grosso gave out a mental health handout, which had a checklist to help gauge where people are at with regard to their mental health. "I feel like we're really seeing a shift now. There's not a tonne of access, but there's definitely a conversation about mental health. That's the first step. In a

room like this, if I say I have depression, you're not going to look at me and say I'm weak. Because historically, that's been a thing," she says. Regarding public health standards, Del Grosso says that there's an increased emphasis on mental health, which is good, as it leads to other things like addictions, and homelessness. "You're not going to do any of this physical activity if you're not keeping your head well. I'm hoping there has been a shift in accepting and opening up. There's more information out there to help friends and family with this. They may tell you they don't want help but they probably do deep down. It's just trying to figure out how to get to them," she says. Del Grosso outlined things to enhance mental fitness and keeping your mind active, like games, learning a new language or hobby, reading, socialization and travelling. She also emphasized how important it was to deal with stress in a healthy way and learning resiliency versus letting stress consume you and make you sick mentally and physically. "Basically, move more, think more and just keep doing," she says. Del Grosso told Bancroft This Week that she thought the session was wonderful and was surprised to see so many people from the community come by for the class. "We talked about socialization, coming out and being engaged in the community. I was very surprised honestly. Again, we haven't been doing a lot of stuff like this in the past few years because of COVID-19. I personally believe in the person to person contact and getting out there. And even for public health to be able to be a face as opposed to a name it's so important. It's engaging the community and I believe that's public health," she says. Holloway told Bancroft This Week that the program was a huge success and she's so grateful to have had the opportunity to provide it for the community. "[Clerk and treasurer] Nancy Carrol was behind the scenes providing an incredible amount of support and numerous community volunteers made every program we ran through the Senior Accessibility Grant go smoothly. Shannon Del Grosso had the group well engaged and the dialogue generated some interesting information and questions. We may be able to have her join us again in the future to speak about the new alcohol limit and other information related to our overall health and wellness," she says. Holloway said there are programs readily available in the larger centres, but getting to them pose some challenges to those residing in rural areas like Tudor and Cashel. She says they have the facilities to provide programming and are constantly looking for opportunities to bring these programs closer to home for Tudor and Cashel residents and neighbouring townships. "It is my intention, along with the help of our community, service providers, local businesses, and volunteers to continue providing programs and activities as much as possible. Some creative thinking may be necessary but I'm a true believer in and have faith that if our residents find value in what we're doing we will succeed. It takes a community," she says. "If the need and desire are there, we can make it happen."