

SIRCH hosts Grand Opening of new Bancroft location



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By Nate Smelle

On Saturday, June 22 the SIRCH Thrift Warehouse held its official Grand Opening of their new location in downtown Bancroft. There was cake, coffee and a constant flow of community members on-hand to enjoy the celebration while browsing the merchandise. According to SIRCH's store lead in Bancroft Mary-Ellen Coghlan, the number of shoppers has been on the rise since moving into their new storefront on Hastings Street North last April.

‘It’s a much more convenient location,’ said Coghlan.

‘A lot of the complaints that I had at the other location were from seniors who couldn’t get to us because they didn’t have a vehicle. Now they can walk to us, so the foot traffic is so much better. There are a lot of people who don’t have a license, can’t afford a car, or for whatever reason couldn’t get to us. I might have seen them once every month or two. Now I see them every other day and they are able to get the things they need for a lot less money.’

Having worked at the previous location for the past two years, Christina Stephens has recognized how the convenience of the new location has made the SIRCH Thrift Warehouse more accessible to the public. She said the atmosphere of the new space is much more inviting.

‘It’s a lot brighter and there are not all those pillars in the way so it flows better,’ Stephens said.

‘There’s a lot more shelf space as well with the longer shelves, so it is much better organized.’

SIRCH's bay lead Don Zilstra was responsible for managing the renovations needed to make the space what it is today. He said there were several major changes necessary including the tearing out of a large concrete wall in the warehouse that use to be the automotive department of Canadian Tire back in the late 70s and early 80s.

‘It looks like a store now,’ joked Zilstra.

‘The other location was more like a barn or a flea market. It took us about two and a half weeks to renovate.’

Gena Robertson, SIRCH's executive director is also excited about the new location and the opportunities to engage with and support the community it will bring. Noting how the profits generated by the store go back into the Bancroft community, she said the store also helps the community by diverting a significant amount of quality secondhand items from the landfill. Robertson said SIRCH has been in contact with several local community groups to learn more about the specific needs of the community so they can do more to help.

‘Our particular focus is on food security and poverty reduction,’ explained Robertson.

‘We know that Bancroft’s percentage of people living on a low income is higher than in Haliburton. Whatever the needs are we want to be as helpful as we can. In the meantime we will do the things that we have already been doing, like the coat giveaway in the fall. We will continue to help people in need when we can.’