

## Artists and activists team up to tackle poverty at Fusion Fundraiser



By Nate Smelle

More than 150 people gathered at The Arlington in Maynooth on Sunday, Oct. 25 to help raise funds for the North Hastings for the North Hastings Community Trust (NHCT) at the first Fusion Fundraiser Hosted by a team of activists and artists from the NHCT and A Place For The Arts the event featured a rich line-up of local talent sharing their art and music with the community to help those in need in North Hastings. Musicians lending their sounds to the initiative included Camaraderie, Mary Milne, Sparrow Park, Brad Culver, Ron Kapitain and Jesse Hanna. A Silent Auction and sales table were made possible through hundreds of donated items.

Community members, businesses and organizations all joined forces to make the rare Sunday afternoon celebration at The Arlington a massive success. Supporters of the cause had the chance to chow down on a delicious East Indian Buffet prepared by local activists Brad Culver and John Crawford, while browsing and bidding on a wide variety of items donated for the silent auction. Donations for the auction ranged from unique artwork and handcrafted artisan items to gift certificates for car repairs, haircuts, meals, wood, massage, foot care and even locally grown food including a 22 pound Hubbard squash.

?The community was extremely generous with donations for the event,? said Jane Kali, Program Coordinator for NHCT.

?We are very humbled by the outpouring of gifts from the community and the support shown at the event.?

Kali told Bancroft This Week that the NHCT found a home early this past summer at A Place for the Arts in Bancroft where they have been working with people impacted by poverty in the art space.

?We have not had office space in town before and we needed a place to be accessible to community members,? said Kali.

?A Place For The Arts has welcomed us and supports the work we are doing to address poverty. Collectively, we are stronger, engaged in building a healthy community together.?

The organizing committee for the Fusion Fundraiser made up of staff and board members from NHCT and members of A Place for the Arts were thrilled to have brought together so many people from different communities. The entire experience was incredibly rewarding, she said.

?Building relationships is key to addressing the impacts of poverty, as we need collective action and support from everyone in order to make change.?

The grassroots fundraising campaign drew in more than double the crowd organizers expected, Kali said, raising more than \$5,000 by the time the doors were closed. With donations still coming in the organizers of the Fusion Fundraiser could not be more content with its outcome.

Funds raised at the gathering will go directly to community members needing financial supports through NHCT. A Place for The Arts also plans to build on the successful partnership by continuing to invest in strengthening their work and art space.

?Together we will continue to collaborate and scheme and imagine and move us into new creative ventures that bring us closer to the better world we all want.?