

## Choices gives more money to local health projects



By Jim Eadie

In April 1991, Choices Thrift and Gift Shop in Bancroft opened its doors with a promise to support health projects in North Hastings, and since that time has more than delivered on that promise. By the end of 2014, the all-volunteer army of mostly women has raised nearly three quarters of a million dollars for the community, and so far this year they have added another \$10,000 to that total by further supporting Hospice House, Cancer Society, Alzheimer's Society, and the Trout.

On April 27, Choices made an additional donation of \$500, this time to the Maynooth Food Bank, along with a promise of an annual gift. Pat Corrin and Mel Dureault, volunteers from the Maynooth Food Bank were very thankful for the support, and especially for the promise of ongoing support.

'We have had a very busy winter,' said Corrin. 'It has been hard for a lot of people with the price of hydro, the long cold winter, some people running out of wood, and a lot of seasonal work.'

The food bank relies on the goodwill of the Anglican Church in Maynooth for space, and the donations of food and money from the community. Money is needed to supplement food donations, especially with fresh produce such as vegetables, eggs, and milk.

'It is a lot of work,' said Dureault, 'but he have a lot of good volunteers.'

A food donation box is available at the community centre library in Maynooth.

Choices volunteer Reatta Fransky noted that their store receives help from Hastings Highlands in the form of donations, volunteers and customer support. Helping out the food bank there was an easy decision. Since 1991, Choices has delivered an incredible total of \$40,350 to local food banks.

Choices offer the shopper a large selection of good clothing, shoes, purses, books and bedding in their bright well-organized store at 22 Bridge St. W. in Bancroft. Donations may be left at the read door of the store at any time.

'We have 28 volunteers here,' said Fransky. 'Only one man we could use a few more men here.'

Keeping up with modern marketing methods, Choices has discovered the power of social media in promoting special sales, and the new student card 50 per cent discount. At present they are being followed by 294 'likes', and the recent student graduation special promotion received over 400 'hits'.

For further information about the store, special promotions, or to become a volunteer call: 613-332-0439 or look for 'Choices Thrift & Gift Shop' on Facebook.