

## Countdown pebble mosaic placed in Lookout Point



By Kristena Schutt-Moore The Hastings Highlands Community Centre was packed with people who had participated in the Countdown Pebble Mosaic Project over the past year on Friday, Sept. 9. The community gathered not only to celebrate the completion of the project in Lookout Point Park, but also to honour and remember those who have been affected by gender based violence. The unveiling was held at the centre instead of the park, to allow everyone in the community to attend, and due to construction at the park of a covered seating structure where people can enjoy the view over Kamaniskeg Lake and the pebble mosaic. So instead those in attendance watched a video recorded earlier in the day of the project organizers unveiling the mosaic. The ceremony was started with a performance of The Butterfly Song, by the Shawashkong Ikwe Singers, in honour of Kijicho Manito Madawaskarini Agonquin First Nations Elder Ada Tinney, who had worked on both this Pebble Mosaic Project and the one created in Bancroft last year. The opening remarks were given by Roberta Della-Picca, a Bonnecher Algonquin, and the Pebble Mosaic Projects Story Keeper. She started with the numbers, that every one in three women have experienced gender based violence, while one in six men have also experienced it, and that those who are LGBTQ2+, Black or Indigenous are even more likely to experience the abuse. In rural areas such as North Hastings the risks increase by 1.8 per cent. It is also believed for victims of gender based violence to get help in rural areas, because of things such as stigma, feelings of shame, physical distance to friends and neighbours as people's homes tend to be farther away from each other and neighbours can not call the police for help if they don't hear the noise, and the fear of everyone in the community knowing what is happening as in small towns everyone knows everyone. The Pebble Mosaic Project in Lookout Point Park was created in partnership between Maggie's Resource Centre and Tamarack Support Group and ReDesign Arts. This is the seventh project that Redefine Arts has created in hopes to one day be able to count down to the end of Gender based violence. Each pebble mosaic is in a different community throughout Ontario and each pattern is different, created with input from the community. The Lookout Point pebble mosaic features several pathways with one showing the pawprints of a bear. This represents the pathways that are chosen by those affected by gender based violence and those of the community. The representation of the bear is to show protection, comfort, strength, family, vitality, courage and health. These are all things that those who have been affected by gender based violence often need to move forward on their own path to healing and to move forward. The Lookout Point Park mosaic is open to the public to visit, it is Maggie's Resource Centre and ReDefine Art's hope that those who visit the space will find their own piece, strength and courage to help themselves, their friends and family and event the community put an end to gender based violence.