

Having a 'Ball' at real estate office grand opening



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On June 1, the office of Ball Real Estate Inc. Brokerage at 71 Hastings Street in downtown Bancroft had their grand opening, complete with a ribbon cutting, cake, popcorn, and a full spread of food and drinks for all those who came by. Councillor George Eastman was there representing the Town of Bancroft. Everyone had a terrific time, judging from the comments from folks who came by. This will be the eighth Ball Real Estate Inc. office to open in the Kawartha region, or as previous owner of Bancroft Real Estate and newly retired broker Tim Fulford put it, "the final piece in the Ball Real Estate Inc. Brokerage pie." Cindy Windover, a team member with Ball Real Estate Inc. Brokerage, who also helps plan out their events, got in touch with Bancroft This Week letting them know about the grand opening and ribbon cutting for their new real estate office, their eighth in the area. Ball Real Estate Inc. Brokerage has offices in seven other locations besides the new one here in Bancroft; their head office in Lakefield, Norwood, Apsley, Peterborough, Hastings, Haliburton, and Bobcaygeon. The first office in Lakefield opened up back in March of 2017. Fulford owned Bancroft Real Estate, where the new Ball Real Estate Inc. Brokerage office now resides at 71 Hastings Street. He opened it back in 2009. He says he used to work with Ball at Bowes and Cocks Realty for many years. "We go back a long way. This acquisition is perfect for Greg too. We're the final piece of his pie. [His real estate offices] are all around us, whereas now he's got the full pie," he says. Ball says they cumulatively have 72 agents and 13 administrative staff across the company and that the new office will definitely keep them busy, but they've got an awesome group. "We're definitely employing locals. What we love about our brokerage is we're local, local, local. Locally owned, no money leaves our area. We have no corporation we give money to. I followed Tim's lead. It's great to be local, do that and put food on the table of all these families," he says. Sales representative Cathy Kaysar, whose family owned cottages locally on Albion Lake and Graphite Lake, thought the new office was lovely and a great spot. "We have so many seasoned agents with waterfront properties that it will be a good asset. Nothing worse than buying a place in cottage country and nobody knows anything about it," she says. After chatting outside with some locals, manning the popcorn machine, getting the balloons ready and setting up the Ball Real Estate Inc. tent, owner Greg Ball, his wife Jen and his whole team gathered for the ribbon cutting. After the ribbon was cut, Ball shouted out; "It's official. Bancroft is going to kick ass!" to applause and a few appreciative laughs. Following the ribbon cutting, everyone went inside where Ball, resource manager Barb Criegern and executive vice president Gareth Jones made the first ceremonial cut to the Ball Real Estate Inc. Brokerage logo cake, then Windover took over and cut slices for everyone present. A certain Bancroft This Week reporter also got a slice and can confirm it was delicious. Ball said that his daughter Julia is a sales representative with the office and has been for five years, but it isn't an easy path

to selling real estate for his kids at his company. My youngest works at the office. All my kids that want to go into the business do two to three years cleaning the offices, earning some respect among the other agents, then another two years working switchboard on front desk to figure out the communication part of the business. The youngest is definitely going to be in the business. She is just going into her second year at Queen's [University]. She only just turned 19 years old. So, I'm three years away from getting her. She is working full time running the desk today. I've learned it's important to see the other employees start from the ground up. Nobody's above anyone else," he says. Ball said his middle daughter runs the waterfront program at the Fairmont in Lake Louise [Alberta]. He said she wants to travel and see the world at this point. "I won't get her for a while at least. I told them all, do what you love doing. Life's too short not to do something that puts a smile on your face," he says. Ball says they'll have some good, clean fun and that they have a pretty tight ship, referring to his business. "All you can build your business on is ethics and we work really hard to do that. I started with my mother 30 years ago and she was a pretty good partner to have. My daughter Julia is in it with me which is pretty awesome. I'll be passing the torch eventually like Tim did. I love this job and I've always loved this job. You get to meet and deal with some great people over the years," he says. Windover told Bancroft This Week that they were really pleased with the event, it was a fabulous day and they all fell in love with Bancroft. "It was great having such a beautiful day. It meant people were able to mingle inside and outside, which was really nice. I would say probably 80 or so people came through throughout the event," she says. "We had about 30 of our agents and staff and another 50 or so who dropped in to see us."