

LEAF Centre's membership growing

By Kaitlin Sylvester

A year end review of the new LEAF Centre was reviewed by the Bancroft council on Jan. 24. Presented by general manager Andra Kauffeldt, the report outlined progress made since the opening of the center in October 2023. Council members addressed the report, along with a copy of the Jan newsletter as part of a consolidated approach to year end program reviews. The Lifestyle Enrichment and Fitness Centre, affectionately known as LEAF, aims to evolve into a hub for health and wellness. Catering to approximately 50 rostered members, the center has a primary focus on seniors and individuals with developmental or physical disabilities. With ongoing efforts to expand programming and partnerships with community organizations, the Centre anticipates introducing several new programs in the coming weeks and months. To bolster outreach and information sharing, LEAF launched its Facebook page in December, a resource meant to provide program details, facility information, current promotions, hours of operation; as well as links directing users to the Town of Bancroft website. During the council session Kauffeldt said "we have the online portal ready to go," though at the time of publication the LEAF page on the Bancroft website was down and the Facebook page was directing users to a dead link. The LEAF team outlined additional steps to modernize the payment system, recognizing the limitations of the current system. Kauffeldt said "we've been working to get the backend set up as we're waiting for the actual handheld" that will allow us to take transfers and paypal as well as credit and debit onsite. This added convenience is meant to enhance the overall experience and accessibility for members. LEAF has also entered into collaboration with private health and wellness practitioners, who now offer their programs within the facility. These independent programs, while not included in the membership fee, provide an array of wellness options for the community. Participants can opt for these programs without requiring a gym membership. During the council meeting, Kauffeldt sang the praises of new gym attendant Heather Lockwood saying "we're thrilled that Heather bwood has agreed to join our team on a permanent part-time basis as our gym attendant."

Lockwoods role extends beyond facility manager; she ensures that every new member receives a personalized orientation session, guaranteeing comfort and safety in using the state-of-the-art equipment. Recognizing the diverse needs of members, Lockwood spearheaded the monthly newsletter, covering a range of health topics. This initiative caters to various communication preferences, with electronic copies available to subscribers and printed versions accessible at the gym for those who prefer traditional means or lack electronic devices. Just one year after securing funding through a \$500,000 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant and \$168,000 federal Community Revitalization Fund, LEAF is fully operational. Council members joked that on the weekends the centre is so busy, just getting across the parking lot is the workout. As LEAF continues to work out the kinks in administration, it stands as a dynamic and inclusive community space.