

Thrift warehouse coming to Bancroft



By Nate Smelle

For more than 25 years the Supportive Initiatives for Residents of the County of Haliburton (SIRCH) has offered a broad variety of community services for people living in the county. Originating in Haliburton in 1989 SIRCH was founded by its executive director Gena Robertson. Recognizing that there are always going to be people in need, and that there would also always be a need for people to get rid of things that they are no longer using, Robertson put her passion for helping others and the environment into action and formed SIRCH. Hoping to share their experience and success with another community SIRCH recently made the decision to expand their operations into Bancroft. Their new thrift warehouse is located just outside of Bancroft at 29556 Hwy. 28 South in an industrial building next door to Kawartha Dairy. "For me it's about creating resilient and vibrant communities," said Robertson. "That's what it's all about. It doesn't matter what community that is. If we can be helpful we want to do our part. At the point where we are actually generating profits?which won't be for a while?we would want them going back into the community." SIRCH provides affordable services, household items and educational opportunities for people and families who are experiencing a wide variety of difficulties. Whether struggling to get by on a low income, or experiencing financial difficulties while coping with illness SIRCH has programs and services that can help. Robertson said SIRCH's dynamic community building strategy incorporates a strong commitment to local job creation. This makes for all around better business because it strengthens the local economies of the communities where they are located. "One of the best ways to level the playing field in my opinion is to give people a decent income," she said. "If we can help do that then we will." By looking for gaps in social and health care services that exist within the

community, SIRCH is able to identify specific needs within the community. The next step is finding and securing funding opportunities to make sure these programs and services can be provided to those in need. SIRCH's new thrift warehouse will help make Bancroft more sustainable on a few different levels, said warehouse manager Sherry Hayes. "It encompasses the pillars of sustainability. It encompasses the economic pillar, in terms of job development or creation, and by putting money back into the community. The social pillar, through providing access for people to affordable goods and services. It encompasses the environmental pillar by diverting waste from the landfill." "The great beauty of thrifting is that everything is unique," Robertson added. "If they can't find something here and will send them to Choices or the Heritage Shop. This isn't a competition, and we're going to promote the other stores around." Hayes said her plan as warehouse manager is to nurture as many partnerships as possible within the community. Making reference to the effectiveness of a marketing strategy she observed on a map linking together the thrift stores in Lancaster County, she believes businesses help one another succeed when they work together. "If you live in Apsley you might not necessarily drive to Bancroft to visit one thrift store, but if there is four of us than that's a whole day's outing. While they're here they are probably to have lunch somewhere, maybe do some shopping. In terms of economic development I think it's a really good thing." Both Robertson and Hayes along with staff and a crew of contractors courtesy of SIRCH's Need-a-Hand program have been working really hard to get the space ready for their official grand opening coming up on Saturday, April 4 starting at 10 a.m. The ribbon cutting will take place at 11 a.m. Confident that the new warehouse will be ready on time they said what they need most now are donations. "We're looking for gently used clothing, toys, furniture, pretty much everything," Hayes said. "Spring cleaning is coming up for a lot of people so we are hoping to get a lot of donations soon." SIRCH's Thrift Warehouse in Bancroft will be accepting donations Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. beginning March 4. For more information on SIRCH visit their Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/SIRCHCommunityServices, or their website at: www.sirch.on.ca.