

The Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CAB) Boys Group take their ideas to the town hall

THE SCOOP



MABLE HASTINGS

Thirteen members of the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CAB) Boys Group, for boys ages 5-12, were asked the question, "What would you do if you were the Mayor of Potton Township?" After much thought and reflection over the last two weeks, the boys prepared some suggestions to share with Potton Mayor, Louis Veillon in a meeting held on Thursday, March 10 during the regular Boys group hours.

Mr. Veillon greeted the boys at the Town Hall and took them on a tour of the offices and building itself explaining what the employees do, where the council meetings are held and how the meetings unfold. The boys were invited to the council meeting area upstairs in the Town Hall where they were given the opportunity to share with Mr. Veillon, their personal ideas and suggestions for improving Potton.

Young Jakob Mierzwinski suggested that we need to "Fix the roads and added, saving people as a bonus idea." Hektor Gravel who is seven years old felt that more should be done for the elderly, "Meals on Wheels, for FREE," he suggested. Six year old Charles Ethier



The Boys Group seated in the town hall council meeting room where they shared their suggestions to better life in Potton with mayor Louis Veillon last Thursday.

ELEANOR COTE

thought it wise to, "Save the animals." Maxime Cote said, "Open a Video Game place," and Collin Tracy thought, "Let's build a gym so people can exercise more."

The suggestions continued with: Omar John who said, "Build a Hostel where people could live." Jacob Daigle thought "Another restaurant in town would be good." Little Ken Clifford (Junior) believed that "giving donations to people and taking care of them in case their house burns," would be an important thing to do as the Mayor. Anthony Marcoux felt that "Potton needs better apartment buildings." Loik Pouliot had hockey on his mind and felt that, "Potton needs an indoor skating rink." Rafael Diorio and Guillaume McDuff had similar ideas and both felt that,

"Skateboard parks and pump tracks are the way to go!"

And finally, as the best reminder that a Mayor and Municipal Council's job is also to take decisions that better or improve the life of citizens was a suggestion made by James Tracy who said, "Plant more trees, make a museum to remind us of our history and where we come from but, most importantly, build a hospital so my Dad does not have to go to Montreal for treatments."

Mayor Veillon listened carefully as the boys made their suggestions and he took note of each and every one. Following the presentation he said,

"Well, I was very impressed with the young boy's ideas about social services!!! They were great with original ideas that helped the general population as a

whole, the interaction was amazing and on a bilingual basis to boot!"

For Elizabeth Harvey (parent volunteer) and Eleanor Cote, assistant to the Director Youth and Special Programs at the CAB Youth Centre, this was a very proud exchange.

"The boys had amazing things to say and spoke with confidence and pride," said Cote. "In turn, the Mayor was welcoming, interested and made the kids feel important, which they are," she added.

For more information about the Missisquoi North Youth Programs in Mansonville, visit www.cabmn.org. The youth centre is a proud member of the CAB family of community programs.

Who cares for the caregivers?

By Gordon Lambie

Last year, when social worker Amanda Rocheleau came home to the Townships offering a workshop on self-care, she had it in mind that the people she would be speaking to would be other professionals in fields similar to her own. Looking to help defeat the occupational hazard of "compassion fatigue," Rocheleau came ready to help the helpers in the community to help themselves. What she found, however, is that the message connected more broadly than expected.

"What I learned from my work in the Townships is that we are all becoming personal caregivers because of the aging population," the social worker said, em-

phasizing that this is particularly for those who fall into what is called the sandwich generation. "We are taking care of young children as well as becoming caregivers for aging parents. Even people who never had the intention of becoming a helper or a caregiver, so to speak, are finding themselves in those roles and they are not prepared."

Drawing on that new understanding, Rocheleau is back again this spring for a similar workshop now attuned to the needs of a much wider audience of caregivers across the community. Recognizing that there are a lot of professional development resources in the area for people in the so-called caring professions, the social worker said that she

wants to help people who lack the training and background for what they find themselves doing to better care for themselves while they care for others.

So what is compassion fatigue?

Rocheleau described the phenomenon as a gradual wearing-away of compassion and energy to help others over time; an exhaustion of the will to help. The feeling, she said, is completely normal, very common, and a source of great guilt and frustration for people who experience it without understanding what is happening.

"When we are in these helping roles oftentimes our compassion is directed outwards. Our attention, our responsibilities, and our care for others is di-

rected outwards," the social worker explained. "Over time we can become depleted and feel exhausted because we don't have a chance to refuel and regenerate our own compassion."

As one might expect, the more exposure to the hardships and emotions of others the helper experiences, the more quickly they find their empathy burnt out unless they can find strategies by which to recharge.

Even as a trained professional, Rocheleau said that she was unfamiliar with the concept of compassion fatigue until she started to recognize it in her own life at home.

"I use myself as a case study," she said.

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