

Perth and District Community Foundation

Foundation's grant programme a source of appreciated support



David Poole PDCF Chair and Victoria Gibb-Carsley Exec Director. At the right a meeting for the Hospice Hub, which counts on the foundation support.

BY MICHAEL BORIERO

While keeping one eye to the future, and seeking to help struggling local non-profit organizations, the Perth and District Community Foundation (PDCF) unveiled a new Community Granting Fund in September, and it has already begun generating donations from the public.

"It's not like 100s [...] of donations but since we announced it, we have 10-ish," says Victoria Gibb-Carsley. "So not many, but to me that's really encouraging because this fund is brand new and what we're trying to do is raise people's awareness that the foundation exists."

Gibb-Carsley is the executive director of the foundation – a position she only started full-time in September. It is a "small, but mighty" organization, she explains, sharing she had been working part-time ever since moving back to Perth a few years ago. Gibb-Carsley grew up in the area.

The main reason behind the creation

of the new fund, she continued, is because local non-profits have had a hard time obtaining funds through traditional sources, such as government and Trillium grants. They're becoming more and more difficult to find, she said.

"They are struggling to make ends meet [...] and so what we thought is if we have a fund that is directly dedicated to these community grants that we give out every year, then we will be better placed to fill the gaps that exist because the other sources are drying up" says Gibb-Carsley.

Last year, the Perth and District Community Foundation awarded over \$500,000 in grants to the local community. This includes funding that went out to "community grant recipients, grants directed by PDCF fund holders, scholarships and bursaries to local high school students."

The foundation has been around for 22 years, Gibb-Carsley noted, and in that time it has accrued a roughly \$7.5 million endowment that grows annually through investments in the market. The organiza-

tion needs to give out a minimum 5 per cent of the endowment every year.

Sustained funding

The PDCF often gives out more than 5 per cent, Gibb-Carsley said, because they have built a well-oiled, self-sustaining funding machine, allowing them to be generous with their grants. According to the executive director, the foundation supported 24 local organizations last year.

"It grows year after year because our endowment grows, so this past year was the most we had ever given out, and to the most organizations, as well. So as we grow, as the fund grows, we're able to give out more and more," Gibb-Carsley says, noting the goal is to never run out of funds.

There are over 200 community foundations in Canada, and what sets them apart from private foundations is that it is community driven – folks coming together, and pooling their donations for the benefit of the community. The mission is

to build a better present and future, she says.

With the new Community Granting Fund, individuals in the community no longer need to set up their own fund within the organization, which takes a substantial amount to set up. Individuals, organizations, and businesses can now make tax deductible donations of \$20 or more.

This is a way to create a deeper connection with the communities involved with the PDCF – Perth, Lanark Highlands, Drummond/North Elmsley and Tay Valley Township. There are many people who want to help out, Gibb-Carsley shared, adding any amount will go a long way.

"My wish is that everybody [...] knows about the Perth and District Community Foundation and that if they can donate to the Community Granting Fund, they can be rest assured that their money will be going back out into the communities that they care about," she says.