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## Fundraiser to Pay it Forward

By JOSEPHINE LIM, Herald-Tribune staff  
Posted 2 months ago

A local accounting firm is putting a twist on a new charity event.

Friesen Bain Chartered Accountants is holding its first Paying it Forward fundraiser on behalf of Odyssey House on Saturday evening.

The event will be at the Stonebridge Hotel and starts at 5:30 p.m.

Guest speaker Bonnie Deane will share her personal story and Edmonton comedian Bob Angeli will close the evening.

It is a women-only event and tickets will only be sold in pairs.

"Our idea was for the women to bring someone that is of great influence in your life, someone who has helped you or guided you in some way that's meaningful to you," said Sheena Goulet, an accounting technician at Friesen Bain.

*"I think people will leave the event feeling that they've accomplished something or that they're really touching someone."*

*Sheena Goulet, Pay It Forward organizer*

"You bring this person and then share this experience with them."

After dinner, attendees will fill a basket in pairs with donated items by various businesses for Odyssey House.

"It's all things for the women either they're necessities in life (or) we're trying to do more luxury things, things that they wouldn't normally buy for themselves," she said.

Some examples of items that will be packed include purses, scarves, socks, journals and books.

"You and your friend would be putting the basket together and that's also part of the theme paying it forward because we also wanted to get everyone involved in it," Goulet said. "The one phrase we've been using is there's so much significance in the power of a simple gift."

Those who buy tickets are also given a list of items that are gently used or new to give to the organization.

"They're just simple things that you would take for granted on a normal day-to-day experience but knowing that something so small is needed is just kind of an eye-opener," she said.

Another part of the event that represents the theme is that every year a different charity will be supported.

"Odyssey House has its own table at the event and they will be announcing who the charity is for next year," she said. "They've already picked their charity and nobody knows who it is."

The idea from the event came from a partner of the firm, Laura Twaft, who is also a chartered accountant.

"It kind of came from the fact that there's so many options like what do you donate to and how do you pick which charity to donate to," Goulet said.

"She kind of dreamt this whole idea up in her head that she wanted to do something that's meaningful and that'll hopefully last for years to come."

Odyssey House was chosen to start the event off because Twaft had a personal connection with the organization, she said, but the goal is to also pick organizations that are underground, just starting out or don't get much funding.

Tickets are selling out fast with only 11 sets of tickets for 22 people left, Goulet said on Friday.

Tickets cost \$150 for a pair; \$75 per person.



Kathy Sheppard.



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The accounting firm's goal is to raise \$10,000 and provide 40 baskets for the women.

"I think people will leave the event feeling that they've accomplished something or that they're really touching someone," she said. "That's kind of the goal for the evening is just in the baskets themselves, you're giving something back to the community and something so simple.

"We're hoping that it will touch them or empower them to keep doing it, kind of the concept of paying it forward."

Katherine Sheppard, the executive director for Odyssey House, said she loves the idea since it's original.

"What I liked about that is when they started this and chose our charity, everything about this event is revolving around Odyssey House," she said.

"I've been really impressed with the women that took this on and just their dedication to the project and ... not only is it going to benefit us, but there's a legacy happening here. It's going to move on into the future."

The money comes at a good time since the organization is looking to move into a 16-unit apartment building to help women transition, Sheppard said.

The house's operating expenses have gone up since it increased to 40 beds about a year a half ago, she added.

Sheppard did lots of thinking and talking with others to figure out which organization should benefit next.

"It really was just taking a look at what's out there as far as non-profit (organizations)," she said. "It's always a tough decision because in my opinion every non profit out there can use this support."

Dinner starts at around 6 p.m. and the basket portion of the event will take place after the meal. There will also be a silent auction.

Tickets can be purchased by calling the office at 780-830-2305 or dropping by at Northridge #203 at 10055-120 Avenue.

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