

New café to serve up healthy meals, training

Trillium grant received
for latest CLNH venture

By Julie Slack
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The Lunch Box Café and Catering Service is on target to open in December.

On Friday, Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh dropped by the café, a new social enterprise created by Community Living North Halton (CLNH), where he presented a plaque from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF).

The OTF, an Ontario government agency, provided a 30-month, \$187,000 grant to help operate the business, which will give people with developmental disabilities training and employment opportunities so they can work in local restaurants.

Milton residents can dine in for breakfast or lunch and take out healthy meals cooked on site at the café, located in the same plaza as CLNH at 917 Nipissing Rd. It'll also have full industrial catering capabilities for external events.

Café manager Cheryl Miller, long-time Milton resident and whose son has made use of CLNH services, said she can hardly wait until it's open for business.

Currently, the café is open to community groups, which hold their catered events



Celebrating the soon-to-open Community Living North Halton (CLNH) Lunch Box Café and Catering Service are (from left) café manager Cheryl Miller, CLNH executive director Greg Edmiston, Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh and CLNH's Louise Wellwood, who's one of the first trainees.

there. Once fully open in December, the diner will feature fresh, roasted-on-site meats like chicken and beef, said CLNH executive director Greg Edmiston, who noted the OTF grant allowed the organization to hire Miller along with three support staff and honoraria for 10 trainees each year.

The end goal is to see the graduates find placements with local food industry businesses.

"There will be no processed meats in that kitchen," Edmiston said. "Meals will be prepared for local residents to stop by and pick up on their way home from work."

He said with the rapid development in town, the timing for the café couldn't be better. Pointing to a new development currently under construction east of Thompson Road

and adjacent to the café, he said the fresh meals will be available for families daily, featuring entrees like shepherd's pie or roasted chicken.

The café is in line with CLNH's vision, "A community where everyone belongs and is valued," said Edmiston, noting the organization has been providing care to children and adults with special needs in north Halton since 1955.

Miller, who's behind the menu and will coordinate the staff, said she's planning a menu to suit many tastes. She promises that it will also be affordable.

And because the eatery has been outfitted in a turquoise chrome retro-style, it will have some diner-style foods that are tried and true — including fresh milkshakes and fresh

sandwiches. It will be open for breakfast and lunch, while take out is available all afternoon for dinner.

Chudleigh, who promised to be one of the café's first customers once it opens, said it's the perfect example of how to make use of a Trillium Foundation grant.

"I applaud CLNH for such creative and forward thinking," he said. "I fully expect a successful program and I am hopeful that the success can be exported to other communities."

Noted Edmiston: "This will let us give individuals the extra support for training that they wouldn't get in the community."

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