

By Sean Pearce, Jul 15, 2011

Scanlon House being restored

Bradford's historic Scanlon House is receiving a little TLC thanks to the generosity of some community partners.

Representatives from the Bradford West Gwillimbury & District Community Foundation, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and the town council gathered in front of the site last week to celebrate a \$3,000 cash donation and \$750 in paint from Benjamin Moore to help spruce up the old home in the Scanlon Creek Conservation Area. It

was also announced the structure will undergo extensive renovations this summer thanks to an in-kind commitment from Baywood Homes.

Once the work is complete, the house will go from being an empty space to a place for all sorts of community programming and activities.

"It's very exciting," community foundation chairperson Bob Evans said. "We're very glad to see things like this come about."

Bradford Mayor Doug White called the effort a wonderful partnership. The finished product will undoubtedly be something of which the entire community can and will be proud, he said.

Ward 2 Councillor Del Crake agreed, adding it's his hope the investment will rekindle an interest in preserving and restoring other buildings from the town's past.

"This will hopefully be a catalyst to get heritage in Bradford West Gwillimbury on the road to recovery," he said. "There are so many old buildings in need of repair, it's just unbelievable."

The prospect of breathing new life into Scanlon House is great news and something worth toasting, LSRCA general manager of conservation lands Brian Kemp said. Once renovations are finished, the building will be an amazing asset for the area, he said.

"It's suffered over the last little bit and it's been home to nothing, but space and air," Mr. Kemp said. "Now, it will be an incredible facility for the community."

Similarly, Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation president Debbie Beatty expressed her gratitude to everyone who had played a part in getting the project going.

"It really is a pleasure to celebrate this new beginning for Scanlon House," she said. "It will once gain be used and appreciated by the local community."

Lawrence Hellings, owner of Bradford Benjamin Moore supplier The Decorator's Edge, said he's happy to help. His company's involvement is part of the Benjamin Moore Community Restoration Program, through Community Foundations of Canada, which is extending grants to 21 organizations in 14 communities nationwide.

"The restoration program is a great way to make a positive difference in our community, by sharing something that we are passionate about — our expertise and our products — with people who are equally committed to the community and its heritage and vitality," Mr. Hellings said.

Conservation authority chairperson and East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson wasn't present at last week's announcement, but said in a media release the revitalization of the home truly is the realization of a vision shared between the community foundation and the authority.

"Mark Scanlon and his family emigrated to Canada from Ireland in the early 1800s and built their beautiful stone farm house at what is now... the Scanlon Creek Conservation Area," Ms Hackson said. "Sadly, over time, it has fallen into disrepair and has sat empty for a number of years.

"Restoring it to provide a place for local community programming as well as staff is a long dream of the authority and the foundation."



Scanlon House. Makeover in store for historic structure. *Staff photo/Michael Barrett*