

Gainneys fund children's environment centre

Gainey Foundation gives Camp Kawartha \$100,000 for facility to be built at Trent University

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The Gainey Foundation chose a self-sustainable environmental education centre for children in Peterborough as its first major project in Canada, Bob Gainey and his daughter, Anna, announced at Trent University yesterday.

Fleming College sustainable building program students will build the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre on Trent University property. The Gainey Foundation has provided \$100,000 to help pull together the partnership.

This partnership brings together pillars in the community such as Camp Kawartha, Fleming and Trent, said Gainey, the general manager of the Montreal Canadiens.

"The other very important part of this partnership was the community of Peterborough, which has supported us so strongly, particularly in our endeavours to raise money in our first evening with the Gainneys (concert and fundraiser)," he said.

"The community at large has really been there to help us, to nurture us and to push us through so we could be standing here today and be in a position to give back to the community that is so important to us."

The Gainey family created the foundation in 2007 to honour Laura Gainey, who was swept overboard from the tall ship Picton Castle during a storm in December 2006, and her late mother, Cathy, who died of a brain tumour in 1995 at age 39.

Anna Gainey, executive director of the foundation, announced in November that proceeds of the next Gainey Family and Friends Concert at Showplace Peterborough March 15 would go to the environmental education facility.

"Given the support that we've had here we felt it was appropriate to really reinvest the money in the community," she said at the event yesterday.

About 50 people attended the announcement in the Gathering Space at Gzowski College at Trent.

The foundation is pleased and honoured to be a part of this project, Bob Gainey said.

"The idea and the concept couldn't have been closer than a bull's-eye for our mission statement for the foundation -environment and arts and education for kids," he said.

Chris Magwood, co-ordinator of the Fleming College sustainable building program, unveiled a model and concept drawings of the Environment Centre.

This is the fifth project for the Sustainable Building course, Magwood said.

"Our aim every year is to make partnerships and to create with the students a public building of some sort," he said. "We always want to make a building that stands in a way that people interact with it and it serves to educate people about sustainable building."

The building will operate off the electrical grid and water system using green technology. It will be located on Pioneer Road on the east bank of Symons Campus at Trent, near the Gzowski College driveway.

Using solar power, the building will create as much energy as it uses. It will have a rainwater collection and treatment system, recycled materials and straw-bale walls, composting toilets and energy efficient lighting.

Camp Kawartha will use the 2,000-square-foot centre to teach children and the community about alternative energy and sustainable living, said Jacob Rodenburg, Camp Kawartha executive director.

"If you want kids to care about the environment, then you need to give them a chance to be in the environment," he said.

The centre will provide access to hundreds of acres of forests, woodlands, wetlands and nature-based programs, Rodenburg said.

"The Gainneys have been the all-important catalyst to forge this partnership," he said.

Camp Kawartha has about \$80,000 to \$100,000 left to fundraise to pay for the \$180,000 to \$200,000 centre, Rodenburg said.

That total cost doesn't include the estimated \$130,000 value of the work that Fleming College students will donate and Trent's donation of the land through a 21-year lease agreement worth \$130,000, he said.

Camp Kawartha plans to seek support from other foundations, from corporations and from the community through a buy-a-bale campaign.

Donations to the buy-a-bale campaign will go toward purchasing the straw bales needed to construct the building.

Magwood said construction could start by the end of April and the centre could open by September.

NOTES: There are still tickets for the March 15 Gainey Family and Friends Concert available at Showplace. Tickets are \$100 and all money will go to the foundation. Greg Keelor of Blue Rodeo, Donnell Leahy of Leahy, John McDermott, Murray McLauchlan, The Sadies and comedian Steve Patterson are just a few of the announced acts. The Peterborough Pro Hockey Alumni has donated back tickets so The Examiner has a few new floor seats available.... The foundation made several grants to charitable organizations from British Columbia to Nova Scotia last year.