

Gateway Rural Health Launches ‘S.H.E.D. Talk’ Project

On Tuesday, November 4, 2022, Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health launched a new project, ‘S.H.E.D. Talks: Sustaining Healthy Farms Through Empowerment and Dedication’.

“Our farmers are the most important business people driving the local, rural economy here and feeding our community. Keeping Farmers healthy should be the number one priority for our community.” - Gwen Devereaux, President of Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health

“No one knows the farm better than the farmer themselves which makes it difficult for them to try to explain to others what it’s like being on the farm 24/7. This is why it is so important that we try to create this farmer to farmer connection so that they are able to lean on each other for support and conversation which is exactly what we are trying to do with S.H.E.D. Talks” - Becky Higgs, Research Assistant of Gateway CERH and active Masters of Counselling Psychology Student

This project and launch event was planned, organized and hosted by the Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health team. Gateway CERH hosted a breakfast for those attending.

The launch featured greetings and introductions from Gwen Devereaux, Gateway CERH’s President. Followed by greetings from Ben Lobb, MP Huron-Bruce; Glen McNeil, Huron County Warden Vicki Lass, Director of Economic Development Huron County; and Jim Ginn, Mayor of Central Huron. Margaret Vincent OFA Huron Perth outlines programs available to farmers under stress. Additionally, a group of approximately 25 Farmers from the Huron County region were present.

Becky Higgs, Research Assistant of Gateway CERH and active Counselling Psychology Masters Student, presented an introduction to S.H.E.D. Talks. The presentation included discussion regarding the importance of the project, which centers around building connections and empowering an agricultural community. Further, it focuses on the goal of reducing social isolation and lessening the daily stressors that farmers experience.

The group had the opportunity to hear from Tom Melady, a local retired Huron County dairy farmer, who had the courage to speak about his own personal journey of dealing with agricultural life challenges. Later in the event, the group heard from Josh Groot, CPA at PTMG LLP in Exeter, who spoke about one of the pressing stressors farmers undergo; this being, Farm Succession Planning.

Margaret Vincent, Member Service Representative of Huron-Perth from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) joined us and spoke briefly on the Farmers Wellness Initiative, Guardian Network and In the Know program.

Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health recognizes their generous donors for their support of this project: Trillium Mutual Insurance and Huron Millwrights.

Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health is a not-for-profit corporation with charitable status. Its mission is to improve the health and quality of life of rural residents through research, education, and communication. To learn more, visit our website at <https://www.gatewayruralhealth.ca/>