

## McGuinty: Good jobs improve healthcare

By Katrina Geenevasen

Premier Dalton McGuinty stopped by for breakfast in Belleville Wednesday morning.

He was in the city visiting the Kellogg plant, which is celebrating the addition of a new production line that will create 48 new jobs.

With the new production line, the plant will add Bran Buds and Kashi Heart to Heart to the Mini-Wheats already produced there.

Dressed casually in dark-wash jeans and a sweater emblazoned with the Liberal logo, McGuinty arrived to a chorus of cheers from spectators waving supportive signs.

He was there in support of Prince Edward-Hastings Liberal candidate Leona Dombrowsky as voters prepare for the upcoming October election.

He began his speech by telling the audience of his family's "distinct and proud" history with Kellogg's cereal.

"I grew up with a big family, and we were entitled to get up in the morning, leave our beds, go downstairs to the breakfast table, and we had access to a pretty well unlimited supply of puffed wheat," said McGuinty. "No cereal was ever designed to more quickly soak up all the milk and sink to the bottom of our bowl than puffed wheat.

"So we weren't big fans of puffed wheat. But we also had the gold that was hidden under my mother's bed. That was Corn Flakes. And when she woke up, she would produce the gold and we knew we hit the big time with Kellogg's Corn Flakes."

On a more serious note, McGuinty said Kellogg's investment in the new production line is a vote of confidence in the skills and knowledge of Ontario workers.

"It's another positive sign that our investments in people are creating jobs," said McGuinty.

Surrounded by the newly hired workers at the plant, McGuinty said that a strong economy means a strong health care system.

"I'm talking about health care this week," said McGuinty. "So what's the connection, here? Well, the connection here is we have growth. We have jobs, and you can't have strong health care if you don't have a strong economy. And the economy is on track. Since January of this year, Ontario, with 40 per cent of the population, has increased 50 per cent of Canada's full time jobs."

He also said that for the past two years, "Ontario has been the second most favorite location in all of North America when it comes to attracting foreign investment."

McGuinty said that in an uncertain and anxious global economy, global investors



Joined by Prince Edward-Hastings candidate Leona Dombrowsky, Premier Dalton McGuinty stopped at the Kellogg plant in Belleville to celebrate a new production line that has created 48 new jobs.

are looking for places to spend their money. "They are looking for a place that is secure and prosperous," said McGuinty. "They say, right after California, that the best place

to go in North America is Ontario, Canada. So that speaks to what is happening here in our province. So with that base, we can support good quality health care, which is

important to all our families."

In a press release, Dombrowsky credited McGuinty's policies for bringing new jobs to the region.

Diane Raniowski, one of the Liberal supporters on hand, said she is thankful for everything the McGuinty government has done in the past.

## Rick Hansen to visit Belleville

By Renée Rodgers

A Canadian icon will be rolling into Belleville next month.

Rick Hansen will be stopping by the city during the Rick Hansen 25th Anniversary Relay. Garnet Thompson, chair of Belleville's accessibility advisory committee, made the announcement at a city hall press conference September 21. He was joined by Karen Kitchen, co-chair of the committee, and Mayor Neil Ellis.

"Thanks to the enthusiasm and excitement exhibited by our community, Mayor Ellis, city council and the accessibility advisory committee, the city has been chosen to have Rick Hansen personally attend the celebration," Thompson said in a speech.

Kitchen, who was born with Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheelchair to get around, has been on the accessibility committee since 2000.

"What Rick Hansen set out to do 25 years ago, was fight for total inclusion, so services were accessible to everyone," Kitchen said in an interview. "He wanted to remove physical and social barriers for disabled people."

Kitchen, who was born and raised in Belleville, said she has witnessed the removal of some of these barriers in the city since she joined the committee eleven years ago. The committee has been active in implementing services such as a fully accessible fleet of Belleville transit buses, as well as specialized mobility transit. A system that allows the city to receive feedback from the public about accessibility to city facilities, programs and services has also been implemented.

The changes made by the city of Belleville to improve accessibility show Hansen's message has been received in this community, Kitchen said.

Kitchen, who met Hansen in Toronto this summer, said she is thrilled to have her idol visiting the city.

"Having him here is like winning the lottery,"



Garnet Thompson (left), chair of Belleville's Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Karen Kitchen, co-chair, announced Rick Hansen would be coming to Belleville Oct. 31 as part of the 25th Anniversary Rick Hansen Relay.

she said.

Hansen will arrive in Belleville Oct. 31 and will make a short speech at city hall around 3 p.m. Later he will appear at the relay's end of day ceremonies at the Multiplex Recreation Community Centre around 5 p.m. While there, he will make a longer speech and take time for photo opportunities. More details will be made available in another media conference to be scheduled before the event, Thompson said.

Hansen, from British Columbia, sustained a spinal cord injury and became paralysed from the waist down after being thrown from the back of a pickup truck at 15 years old. Not letting his disability get in the way of his passion for sports, Hansen went on to win several international wheelchair

marathons, as well as medals at the Pan American Wheelchair Games and Paralympic Games.

Hansen began his original Man in Motion Tour in 1985. During the tour, which lasted more than two years, Hansen wheeled more than 40,000 kilometres through 34 countries, raising \$26-million for spinal cord injury research and accessibility initiatives, said the relay's official website.

The 25th anniversary relay, which began August 24, 2011 in Cape Spear, Newfoundland and Labrador and concludes in Vancouver on May 22, 2012, will re-trace the Canadian segment of the original tour. Belleville will be one of more than 600 communities the tour will travel through as it makes its nine-month, 12,000-kilometre journey across the country.

## City's services for homeless prepare for cold winter ahead

By Trish Allison

While it seems far away, winter is quickly approaching and Belleville will soon experience a flurry of homeless people looking for shelter, local experts say.

Over the past 10 years, homelessness in Belleville has increased across the board. Reta Sheppard, housing co-ordinator at Hastings Housing Resource Centre, said that's due to changing times.

"Things have changed," she said. "The economy has changed. And, people are losing jobs. Rent is going up and people can't afford housing."

And with changing times comes the change in weather. Historically, Belleville's temperature trends show that by the end of November the overnight low averages -4.4 C, according to Sgt. Doug George from the Canadian Forces Base, Trenton weather office.

"Then once you get into December, January or February are obviously the colder months; that's where you're going to hit your really cold [weather]," he said.

Sheppard estimated Belleville is home to approximately 20 to 30 homeless people living on the street. He said last year the housing centre saw a little over 1,500 hidden homeless, 96 per cent of which were homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The one thing Belleville needs, it lacks. "It's disgusting and sad that Belleville doesn't have a permanent shelter because there are so many people who need it. What does that say about Belleville?" asked Lindsay Craggs, a former youth counsellor for the homeless and currently a student at Loyalist College.

"In layman's terms, it basically says we don't care about our homeless," she said.

Homeless people can be defined in two ways: street homeless and hidden homeless. Both are a problem among Belleville residents.

Street homeless are people living and eating on the street. Hidden homeless, or couch surfers, are people who spend nights with family or friends, or stay at hostels or motels due to inadequate financial funds. Hidden homeless are often not noticed by the public, and are last on the priority list

for help by service providers.

Hastings Housing provides assistance to locate, secure and maintain immediate, temporary and permanent housing to people who are looking for help. And although it proves to be a helpful service, it isn't a shelter and does not provide the same kinds of services.

That, however, isn't necessarily true. About eight to 10 months ago a committee was formed and it is currently working to bring Belleville what is needed. But what Belleville needs comes at a cost.

"It takes a lot of money to build a shelter, and then to maintain it and to staff it," said Sheppard.

In order for the committee to get funding, it'll have to draw up proposals and find a way to access the money it needs, leaving the arrival of a shelter up in the air, she said.

There are, however, services within the city that offer some relief to the homeless.

Transition homes provide a temporary place (generally a six-month stay) for individuals or families. Food and other necessities, including support in getting financial, medical or legal help, is also provided. But many have very limited space, some as little as four beds, which means to the

more than 1,500 hidden homeless, it's a first-come, first-served situation.

During the winter months, the Red Cross runs a program to provide a van, which is parked in different locations in Belleville and Trenton. The van is a space for people to get warm and have some hot soup and coffee. But then it's back into the cold.

In the heart of winter, Belleville offers a program called Out of the Cold from January to March. The program provides overnight shelter to adults looking to stay warm during long cold winter nights. Last year, Out of the Cold saw 43 different individuals, averaging six visitors a night.

However, with the number of homeless increasing in the city, Craggs feels more is required.

"Something needs to be said to council," she said. "...there are so many people who are homeless and need a place to go."

## Loyalist College enrollment not affected by strike

By Renée Rodgers

The Ontario-wide college support-staff strike hasn't discouraged students from registering at Loyalist College, says the school's president.

Maureen Piercy she doesn't expect enrollment to the school to have declined from last year.

"We understand that our full-time enrollment is at about the same level as last year," Piercy said in an interview September 19, the day after Ontario Public Service Employees Union and the bargaining team representing all 24 Ontario colleges

reached a tentative agreement. "But that was 10 days ago. We continue to register students through the first 10 days of school so it really remains to be seen where it will all shake out."

Support-staff workers at all 24 Ontario colleges began what would be an 18-day strike September 1. The main issues in the strike were job security, benefits and wages.

A tentative agreement, which still must be approved by college support-staff members, was reached Sept. 18. Staff returned to work Sept. 20. The union had originally asked for a three-

per-cent annual wage increase over three years. The website for the union's local chapter, number 421, said the tentative agreement is for a three-year contact with percentage increases of 1.5, 1.75 and 2.0. Concessions have also been removed, said the website.

College support-staff includes registrars, counselors, librarians, administrators, IT staff and cleaners.

While Piercy said final enrollment numbers have not yet been calculated, the information will become known in the coming weeks.