



## Raise a flag, post a sign, Stop human trafficking

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Guelph Mayor Cam Guthrie raises a flag outside city hall on July 27 to mark Human Trafficking Awareness Day, which falls on July 30. Guthrie was joined by members of the Rotary Club of Guelph South and executive director of Elora House Luisa Krause, to Guthrie's right. Elora House is a residential facility that helps women and girls escaping human trafficking. Photo by Joanne Shuttleworth

GUELPH – It’s the silent crime, often unnoticed, and it runs right through Guelph and Wellington County.

And the Rotary Club of Guelph South wants everyone to be aware that human trafficking is here and girls, boys, men and women are being coerced into it.

The club raised a Stop Human Trafficking flag at Guelph city hall on July 27 and is running a lawn sign campaign through the summer to help draw attention to the issue.

Human trafficking “is a heinous crime,” said Rotarian Linda Main at the flag raising.

“It thrives in dark shadows and corners. It is our responsibility to shine a light on the abusers and users of human trafficking.”

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“Knowledge is the greatest prevention. The more we know, the more we can do.”

The Guelph South club decided a few months ago to make eradicating human trafficking a priority project for the club.

Club members have spoken to local councils hoping to get an endorsement, and is working with groups like CrimeStoppers Guelph Wellington, which also has a Stop Human Trafficking campaign.

Luisa Krause, executive director of Elora House, attended the flag raising and spoke about the challenges her agency is facing as it provides housing, food, and therapy programs for women fleeing human trafficking.

“It takes time to heal,” Krause said. “These women have experienced physical and emotional trauma.

“What we give them is a safe place, no judgement and unconditional kindness.”

Elora House opened in March 2020 and has been getting by during the pandemic.

Recently someone offered a larger dwelling for the residential facility so it can now accommodate up to seven women at a time.

It also means Elora House can offer Level 2 care, which includes a longer stay at the facility.

“Now we can help the girls for longer,” Krause said. “We see their lives transformed.”

Mayor Cam Guthrie thanked Rotarians for taking on the cause and encouraged others to get on the bandwagon too.

“Talk about it, spread the word and support those in need,” he said. “We have to remind ourselves that these hidden crimes are going on.

“Our area is in the middle of the 401 corridor. This is where it happens.”

The Rotary club is giving away lawn signs that say “Stop human trafficking” and is encouraging people to put them out for a month.

Anyone interested in getting a sign can email Main at [lindat.main@gmail.com](mailto:lindat.main@gmail.com).



**Joanne Shuttleworth** (<https://www.wellingtonadvertiser.com/author/joanne-shuttleworth/>)

Reporter

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