

Walking Village Steps Up

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The Walking Village, which originated in the Village of Flesherton, is brushing off its hiking boots and stepping into its new role as an incorporated not-for-profit.

"Our aim has always been and continues to be simply to promote and enhance the enjoyment of walking in our area," David Turner, chair of the organization says. The Walking Village began in 2008 as an initiative of the Flesherton & District Chamber of Commerce and guides free public walks, such as the popular Priceville Heritage Walk and the Flesherton Foraging Walk.

"We're very excited with our new official status. This will allow us to apply for funding from provincial granting organizations such as the Trillium Foundation and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport," Turner says.

The organization has worked with the Municipality of Grey Highlands, conducting a Walkability Assessment for the Village of Flesherton and presenting it to council, and advocated with both the municipality and the Bluewater school board to improve pedestrian safety on the highway south of the Village of Flesherton. The construction of new sidewalks on that busy section will begin this summer.

"We are supportive of active transportation and walking for health and recreation," Turner says, "And we will continue to offer free walks for residents and visitors to our area." A Snowshoe Hike at Lake Eugenia is in the works for March 21. There will be information about that, and the group's annual Jane's Walk in May, on the walkingvillage.org website. The organization also seeks to create, with other trails and hiking groups in the region, a Grey- Georgian Walking/Trails Network.

"To usher in our new non-profit status we are encouraging local walkers to become "friends" of the organization and help us to provide even more walking adventures in our area," Turner says. Speak with any of the executive board members to get your membership card with the pledge: I Promise to Walk. Membership is free and donations are encouraged.

Board members are: David Turner, Geraldine Robinson, Julie Reitzel, Rhonda Iadinardi-Parker, Stefanie Bernard, Jon Gillette and the two newest members: Gary Gingras and Rosanne Caruso. Gary is the owner of Cedars of Lake Eugenia Cottage Resort and Rosanne operates Eugenia House B&B and is a partner in Stay in Grey, a Grey Highlands tourism organization.