***Alethia O’Hara-Stephenson***

***Bio:***

Good evening,

My name is Alethia O'Hara-Stephenson and I'm excited to be your candidate for Upper grand disteixt school board trustee.

I am a wife, proud mom of three amazing children, and a community leader who is passionate about supporting our youth so they are empowered to be our future leaders.

I believe every child should have the opportunity to access the resources and support required to reach their full potential. As a parent in this school board district, I know first-hand the needs of this community and that is one of the many reasons why my husband Alton and I created the very first and only free drop in program in Shelburne! This program is open to all students in Shelburne and the surrounding area and is designed to allow students to come in to play, learn, and develop teamwork, self-confidence and leadership skills in a safe and healthy environment. I believe that the individuals entrusted with our children’s education need access to resources and support to help them succeed. It is my vision to ensure that all families and educators have this access and if elected I will fight to ensure that our educators and families have the tools they need to help our youth to succeed. Having one child who successfully completed high school at Center Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) and one still in elementary school reinforces my desire to ensure everyone succeeds. I am proud of this beautiful community and as a professional in the financial services industry I will bring my leadership experience, as well as new and creative perspective to the table that is inclusive and representative of all. I am approachable, open, courteous and respectful of your individual needs. I will work with the community to find solutions and answers that puts our youth first.

As your candidate for the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) Trustee, you can count on me to be there, to be [#accessible](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/accessible?source=note), [#visible](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/visible?source=note) and [#present](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/present?source=note). I will listen to your needs and advocate for you. If you believe in my vision for UGDSB, please vote for me on October 22, 2018.

Thank you for your support!

***Education:***

BA- Political Science, York University, CIP (Chartered Insurance Professional), MBA Candidate 2018, Leadership & Innovation.

***Experience:***

* Over 20 years of experience in the Insurance and Financial services industry leading teams and managing change.
* Several years of experience leading and participating in various community events such as diversity events and youth mentoring in Peel
* Founding member of WLC (Women’s Leadership Council) of Peel
* Key note speaker on Leadership and Education at the Côte d’Ivoire Governance Conference held at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal 2014
* Facilitator and co facilitator of various Financial Literacy sessions in Peel with United Way’s Women United Council
* Volunteer with Junior Achievement, delivering the “Economics For Success” program in classrooms
* Regular supporter of the JDRF program (riding for the cure)
* Organized a team of climbers for the United Way CN tower Climb
* Supported the first annual local Multicultural Day event in Shelburne through donations and entertainment recruitment
* Co-Advertising Coordinator & member of the Shelburne Fiddle Parade Planning
* Co-founder of Tri-SAS sports with Husband Alton Stephenson – A free non competitive sports drop-in program at Glenbrook Elementary and Center Dufferin District High School offering leadership and volunteer hours for High School Students

**Contact information:**

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**Areas of Interest/Platform:**

In speaking with parents and students in the community a common theme and concern was raised by many around the following:

* Arts & Athletics- both competitive and recreational
* Mandatory swimming programs in all elementary schools
* More athletic programs and clubs in high school
* More science based and university level courses in high school

As your candidate for the Upper Grand District School Board I plan to advocate for those needs.

Here are some areas that I believe are important to help develop our youth and community, **however** it is important to note that it is not my views that are important but the views of the many students, teachers and parents that I would represent.

***Arts & Athletics***

Research continue to show that students who participate in Arts and Athletics perform better academically, have improvements in attendance and positive behavioral attitudes. I believe having well rounded students involved in more than just academics help them to prioritize better, feel better, have a sense of community, develop great team work and collaboration skills and have an overall beneficial effect in their lives. I plan to continue offering the free drop in program to encourage our youth to come out and play, develop leadership, collaboration and team building skills in a safe environment. I will work with our schools to find out specific needs and priorities and advocate for those needs.

***Literacy & Numeracy***

I believe reading can transport a child into a whole new world and opens up their imagination to new adventures. Every child should have the opportunity to develop a love for reading and as such I plan to explore opportunities to incorporate more reading and storytelling in every school.

Financial literacy is another point that is dear to my heart. Many students leave high school not equipped for post-secondary, a job or adulthood. I plan to work with our schools and community leaders to find creative ways to incorporate financial literacy in our schools that will prepare our students for the world. This includes the basics of budgeting and saving, opening a bank account and planning for the future.

***STEM***

I plan to advocate for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math in our schools while ensuring that it is inclusive for all students.

***Health & Safety***

Mental health continue to be a stigma in society and we need to get beyond hiding and putting it behind closed doors. I will work with our schools, support groups and community to advocate for ongoing support around mental health, anxiety and cyberbullying to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all.