



Putting people first a great reason to run

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Laura Dupont understands that her community of Port Coquitlam is all about people and families, and this is motivating her to run for the first time in this fall's municipal election.

"Raising a family and spending over a decade volunteering with various groups in the community has kept me involved in my city, says Dupont. "People make up families and communities, and by making a conscious effort to put people first I feel confident I will make a good city councillor."

For Dupont, a big part of putting people first is making sure that every family has the opportunities they need. "Being active in minor sports has given me the opportunity to consider the growing number of families who can no longer access such opportunities for their children due to the increasing costs. I feel inspired to work for greater equality so all of our children can have the same opportunities."

Providing such opportunity has been an important part of Dupont's work as an HSA member working as a Program Assistant at SHARE Family and Community Services, a community organization that provides support to vulnerable individuals and families in the Tri-Cities area.

Promoting sustainability in her community is another key goal for Dupont. "Port Coquitlam is a wonderful community, with more parks per capita than any other municipality in Metro Vancouver," says Dupont. "It is a city surrounded by rivers and trails that provide wonderful recreation opportunities, making it easy to live a healthy and active lifestyle. Port Coquitlam is getting it right and I want to get a seat on council to make sure we stay 'on track' and preserve what we have."

STARTING EARLY KEY TO BEING "READY TO RUN"

"I started to bring together a group of people interested in making positive change in March 2013. A series of small fundraisers allowed me to start raising money and reach out to the community for support," says Dupont. "Being organized early has helped to alleviate the typical barriers women face that include a shortage of time

and money."

"HSA has also been extremely supportive, providing me with the opportunity to gain valuable campaign experience in different roles within a local campaign during the last provincial election. Learning how to fundraise, canvass, get-out-the-vote and be ready for Election Day was an important experience that helped prepare me to organize my own campaign."

HSA also provided Political Action Fund support for Dupont to attend a special candidate training workshop at the Canadian Labour Congress Harrison Winter School, as well as a forum for progressive people serving in elected positions in local government. "Learning about progressive policy ideas and meeting so many people who share the same values was really inspiring. This event was a great chance to understand the ways other municipalities shape policy and build their communities."

But in the end, for Dupont it all comes back to family and people. "I was hesitant to suggest running for council to my family because I knew we would all have to make sacrifices," says Dupont. "I have been pleasantly surprised by how truly supportive they are and how incredibly helpful they have been. Though I didn't expect it, my run for council has made my family stronger and inspired us all."

"And with support from my family and my campaign team, I have already knocked on almost 1,000 doors to listen and learn about what matters to the people of Port Coquitlam."

YOUR UNION CAN GIVE YOU A HEAD START

HSA members considering running for municipal, school board or regional district positions this year should make these decisions soon and start working on their campaigns early.

Members may apply for financial support from HSA's Political Action Fund to attend training, to take paid time off work for their campaigns, and to help with campaign expenses. For more information, please contact Carol Riviere at criviere@hsabc.org.

Members running for election are also encouraged to apply for endorsement from their local labour council. Contact information for labour councils is available at <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/pacific-region/labour-council-directory>.

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