Our Town Rocks with a new leader

Caryl Sutterby says she is passionately thrilled to be named coordinator of the Barrington/Dundee/Starkey community organization. Lauren Snyder, who has been coordinator of the Dundee-Starkey-Barrington community organization Our Town Rocks, is retiring at a time when she's convinced it would be better served by a full time leader.

That's why she's pleased to be turning over the helm to Caryl Sutterby. What makes the deal even sweeter in Snyder's eyes is Sutterby's long commitment to the community and the strong ties she already has with Dundee Village officials.

"The OTR project is ready to go to another level, and really needs a full time coordinator, which she will do," Snyder told the Dundee Village Board last week.

Sutterby's official start date was Jan. 19, and Snyder's official retirement date is Feb. 1.

Calling herself "Passionately thrilled" to be on board, Sutterby says the opportunity to apply for the coordinator job came along at the perfect time for her. She had been wanting to find a way to work in her own community more. For several years, she was employed at a radio station in the Elmira area before taking her most recent positions at Watkins Glen International and Watkins Glen Promotions.

"Caryl said all the things she has done in her life have brought her to this point," adds Snyder.

Funded by the Greater Rochester Health Foundation and sponsored by the S2AY Rural Health Network, Our Town Rocks is a resident-driven organization with an ultimate goal to improve the health of the residents of the community. It was established in the summer of 2008.

"So the challenge is to listen to the residents," says Snyder, explaining that while a plan is developed based on information from residents, it's just as important to have a plan that can be fluid and flexible. "You have to hear what the community wants," she explains.

Although she's not a resident of the Barrington/Dundee/Starkey community, Snyder promises to stay involved with community efforts such as the Rotary Club.

Work groups that are part of Our Town Rocks address health improvement, social activities, beautification, economic opportunities and Our Town Rocks and Reads. Recent projects have included improvements to the nature trail at the Spring Street Park, Community Reading Nights, and the Mobile Food Pantry. The beautification work group has added plantings, trees, benches, banners and rocking chairs to downtown Dundee. Another group that included 24 youth established a community garden.

The Dundee Rotary Club joined efforts with Our Town Rocks and Reads to build bookcases for each pre-kindergarten student in the Dundee Central School.

Snyder says Sutterby's connections to the Village Planning Board and the Yates County Planning Board will help in Our Town Rocks' efforts to establish Complete Streets. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, such streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

As part of its role in economic development, Our Town Rocks maintains a grant and loan program for new businesses. So far this year, three projects have applied for funds through this program. In all, 23 grant/loan packages have been awarded and the majority have been successful.

For more information about Our Town Rocks, visit http://www.ourtownrocks.org