

Business

To reach this section call 845-3824 Fax:337-5567



Photo by Riziero Vertolli

VistaCard President Ross Munro, along with Daniel and Nathan Wise and Mayor Ann Mulvale: helping local businesses and community groups to raise money.

VistaCard brings retailers together in support of schools & minor sports

A local company has launched the Oakville VistaCard Card that raises funds for schools and sports teams while encouraging residents to shop in Oakville.

VistaCard Marketing Group Ltd. explained that the program is a community-focused fundraising, savings and marketing initiative consisting of a partnership of the retail business community, schools, minor sports organizations and local residents.

Members of the community purchase the cards from students or team players for \$20 with half of that price

retained by their school or team. In return, card holders receive a discount of at least 10 per cent at more than 100 participating Oakville VistaCard retailers and service providers.

"The enthusiasm from all the participating parties has been tremendous," said VistaCard President, Ross Munro. "I've been very impressed by the way everyone has demonstrated a desire to work together. It's a fresh approach in Oakville and the support has been overwhelming."

The VistaCard program is using full colour brochures, retail posters

and window decals as well as banners, posters and extensive incentive prize packages for the schools and sports teams.

More information is available on the website www.myvistacard.com

"Our goal in this first year is to achieve sales of at least 10,000 VistaCards in Oakville," said Munro. "This would mean that VistaCard assisted our participating non-profit organizations in raising \$100,000 and at the same time we have hopefully helped our local retailers increase their sales."

Region's Environmental Services director honoured

Halton Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline will be recognizing Regional staff member **Ric Robertshaw** in Council today for being awarded with the "Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year Award" from the American Public Works Association (APWA).

Robertshaw, a 26-year employee at Halton Region, is Director of Environmental Services for the Planning & Public Works Department, and past president of the APWA - Ontario Chapter, and the Canadian Public Works Association (CPWA). During his career, Robertshaw has always been committed to the improvement of public works and his leadership has resulted in great benefits to the profession.

"We are exceptionally proud of Ric's accomplishment," said Halton Region's Chief Administrative Officer, Brent Marshall. "He has been an advocate for positive change and has exemplary leadership and management skills to be listed among the very best in his field, in his own country and across the United States."

Robertshaw has provided innovative leadership in all public works areas particularly in infrastructure management and operations. He led the technical input in the development of Master Servicing and Financing

schemes for water and wastewater services, and was responsible for the initiation of optimization programs at wastewater treatment plants and the rationalization of wastewater effluent parameters dealing at the Municipal and Provincial level.

He is currently serving as the Chair of the Expert Panel overseeing the performance measurement and benchmarking exercise for the water and wastewater functions of 11 of the largest municipalities in Ontario. He also facilitated expansion of the Canadian National Benchmarking Water & Wastewater Partnership. This initiative is now rolling out as a national program representing more than 50 percent of Canada's population served by water and wastewater systems.

In addition, when the Government of Canada, through the National Research Council and co-sponsored by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the CPWA, established the need to develop a "National Guide to Sustainable Municipal Infrastructure: Innovations and Best Practices," Robertshaw, as CPWA President and technical expert, became a key player in defining the concept, development process, and governance of the project.

"Ric is a leader not only for Halton Region, but for the Public Works profession as a whole," said Patrick Murphy, Commissioner, Planning & Public Works Department, Halton Region. "He has made a tremendous impact in the profession, and in our department, and we look forward to his future contributions."

The APWA Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year Award coincides with National Public Works Week (May 20-26) which provides the opportunity for public works professionals to highlight the work they do for all of their citizens.

The award seeks to inspire excellence and dedication in public service by recognizing the outstanding career service achievements of individual public works professionals and officials, from both the public and private sectors, from across Canada and the United States.

Judith M. Mueller, APWA President states in the May issue of the APWA's The Reporter, "The Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year award is the ultimate professional honour a public works professional can receive. The award is the recognition by their peers that they have significantly contributed to the profession, to their communities, and to the people they serve."

Athena Awards recognize people who care about community

By Anne Day
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

"How many of you are tired, bored, and feel you're not growing?" asked Dr. Jerri Nielsen. "Then get out. There's no reason to wait five years to see if it will change. It won't."

Strong words of advice from the physician who made headlines, when she treated herself for breast cancer while stationed at the South Pole. Short in stature, but mighty in spirit, she amazed the audience with her slides and stories of the Antarctica.

In total darkness for six months of the year, with winter temperatures as low as 100 degrees below zero, many of us could not even begin to imagine living under such conditions. Yet, Nielsen described it as a life-enhancing experience.

Life was simple. No movie theatres, no shopping malls, no distractions. She had time to think about what was important to her. She was able to get in tune with her soul. It was an opportunity to hear something that had always been there, but she had always been too busy to listen. She had found peace in chaos and was able to do battle and let go of some of her demons.

With 41 people living together in cramped quarters, there was little privacy. They created their own society, with its own morals and values. Everyone's

role was vital to their existence and survival, from the cook to the person looking after the generator. No one was valued or ranked higher than another. They were equal.

Her message was one of inspiration. She reminded the audience that the sky's the limit. She urged, "You only have one ticket. Don't wait, you have to make your own luck."

Nielsen was just one of 40 speakers who presented at the 8th International Athena Conference in Nashville. Barbara Jenkins was another glowing example of a woman who had followed her dreams. She'd walked 3,000 miles across America and eloquently described her adventures from trapping alligators, being attacked by outlaws to falling off ice glaciers in the Rockies.

But courage wasn't just reserved to the presenters. Dr. Marylee Davis, a professor at Michigan State University, was the first person to receive the Athena Award in 1982. In a body cast, her body broken in pieces as a result of a serious car accident, she described her award presentation. "They actually came to the hospital with the media to present me with the award. We had to scramble to find a hospital gown large enough to cover my cast!"

Since then, over 3,500 Athena awards have been presented to individuals, both men and women, who have achieved professional excellence, given back to

their community and opened the doors of leadership for other women. The award is offered in Canada, United States and Russia, and a conference on women and leadership is held each year.

Mentorship was a key theme of this year's conference, with the introduction of the Athena Foundation's Global Links program, an e-mentoring project between Athena recipients and students at the all-female Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. Through this exciting new program, 50 students are being mentored by women leaders from across North America whose area of expertise matches the chosen fields of the students.

But mentorship can occur in all our lives, through contacts with friends, family, children and even chance encounters with strangers. "We often fail to recognize our mentors as such at first," observed Dr. Susan Ford Wiltshire, workshop presenter and author of Athena's Disguises, Mentors in Everyday Life, and it is not until years later that we come to realize the contributions they have made in our lives."

Becoming your own mentor and inner coach was a topic covered by psychologist Susan Massenzio. In her workshop, she provided tips and suggestions on how to overcome the internal barriers that can plague us as we navigate through life's transitions to pursue our goals.

Dr. Dan Kindlon's insightful presen-

Realtors catering to 50+ market

MatureMoves provides specialized assistance in helping older clients buy and sell their homes

By Howard Mozel
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

MatureMoves, a new service catering to the needs of home buyers/sellers aged 50-plus, is now available from **Century 21 Miller Real Estate Ltd.**

According to Mary O'Brien and Cheryl Kopko, the sales representatives offering this tailor-made assistance, MatureMoves features specialized resources and attention designed to help older clients navigate the sometimes confusing process of buying and selling.

"It can be a roller coaster ride," said Kopko.

This is especially true, O'Brien says, of people who have lived in their family home for decades, even 50 years or more. "They often have absolutely no clue what the market is like, interest rates, deposits."

For example, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association, the average residential house price in this country has risen from roughly \$65,000 in 1980 to over \$160,000 in 2000. For senior sellers who have paid more attention to their gardens than the price of their home, the realities of the new millennium can come as a shock.

"They require tremendous patience, particularly through the offer process," said O'Brien.

MatureMoves, though, also encompasses getting clients' homes in the best possible shape for sale, correct pricing, marketing to the right buyers and much more. After providing all the expertise in these areas, however, Kopko stresses that the client remains in the driver's seat.

"They're boss," said Kopko, who, along with O'Brien, realized from their dealings with clients just how much a service like this is needed. "We build the resources that accommodate their special needs."

After all, the duo has seen first-hand how people can make wrong decisions or be pressured without all their needs being taken into consideration.

"Something as simple as parking can be a nightmare," said Kopko, a former



Photo by Peter C. McCusker

Mary O'Brien and Cheryl Kopko of Century 21 Miller Real Estate Ltd.: filling a need for niche clientele

registered nurse.

Very often what happens is another - perhaps unnecessary - move takes place relatively soon after the first one.

"We consider the stress plus the social, economic and emotional impact of a move in considerable detail so that they make the right decision," said O'Brien, who earned her Masters in Social Work.

According to Kopko and O'Brien, the sheer spending power and number of those in the mature set makes them a huge market worthy of all the attention a realtor can give them: 45 million North Americans are age 60-plus; someone turns 50 every eight seconds, or 10,000 a day; 70% of total wealth is controlled by those 50-plus.

O'Brien and Kopko were recently asked to prepare a seminar on the topic by 50-Plus Lifestyle and Travel Shows for presentation at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum and the Metro Convention Centre. Preparing their talk, "Selling Your Family Home," acted as a catalyst for the pair to crystallize MatureMoves into a single, coherent package in order to expand their existing services.

"The response to the seminars was very favourable," said O'Brien, who explained that attendees were knowledgeable but still needed help.

Kopko said the questions posed to them ranged from legal queries ("Why do I need a lawyer?") to preparations to sell ("Do I need a survey?") MatureMoves, though, offers information about a host of topics which clients may or may not have even considered: the benefits of accurate pricing, the affordability and accessibility of different housing types; moving and closing costs; home inspections and more.

MatureMoves is available through participating Century 21 offices across Canada. To reach O'Brien or Kopko, call 845-9180.

explains Carolyn Madden, executive director of the Athena Foundation. "We encourage both men and women to incorporate those concepts into their own leadership practice."

The 9th International Athena Conference will be held in Dallas, Texas, April 25 to 27, 2002. Will I be there? You bet. This conference has become my gift to myself. It feeds my soul, broadens my knowledge, and restores my hope for the future. And it's not just the speakers, it's being with like-minded men and women who share your values, who are committed to their community and who actively reach out and support others. They instinctively understand the importance of celebration, of family and friends. They want to make a difference, and they do.

For more information about the Athena Awards Program or the Athena Leadership Model, leave a message for Diana Saulez, chair of the Athena Committee at the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, 905-845-6613. Nominations for the 2001 Athena Award Recipient are currently underway. To receive a nomination form, contact The Oakville Chamber of Commerce. The deadline for nominations is June 30.

Anne Day was Oakville's 1999 Athena recipient. She attended the 2001 Athena Conference with Patricia Dillon, the 2000 Athena recipient, and Diana Saulez, chair of the Oakville Athena Committee.