

Ingenuity of local postal workers saves \$165,000 per year

Local six-member team shares special award

By Angela Blackburn
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Donna Snell's Postmark Award was signed, sealed and delivered by Canada Post last week.

Snell, 44, was a stay-at-home mom who returned to work just two years ago.

Today, she's one of a six-member award-winning team at Oakville's post office that was recognized with an award from Canada Post at a recent gala held at Toronto's Radisson Plaza Hotel.

Another Oakville resident, Gail Lindsay, a 27-year postal veteran, was also on the team that picked up the Silver Postmark Team Award.

Called the Oakville Revenue Verification Unit, the team is headed by Dennis Williams-Yeagers of Burlington; Michael Madden and Judy Mackey of Mississauga and Brent Baughman of Beamsville.

This is the 11th year Canada Post has hosted the Postmark Awards. The Oakville team, which works out of 193 Church St., was among 13 award recipients.

Charged with maintaining quality service and on the lookout to recover revenue, the Oakville team noticed customers, particularly a dozen or more large shippers, weren't following the new process of cubing parcels.

That philosophy sees parcels, particularly large ones, which may weigh a small amount, but are of considerable mass, sized to reflect the true cost of shipping. The process is used by all the leading couriers and shippers.

According to team leader Williams-Yeagers his crew was likely "going cross-eyed" with all the additional hours they spent checking the shipping manifests against the packages at the post office's loading dock door.

Some of the revenue recovery came from a return-to-sender policy, the rest from a back-billing to the customers.

"We saved about \$165,000 annually," said Snell. Williams-Yeagers said, "Maybe more."

"The Oakville team created a system so successful, it will be used in other offices," said Canada Post communications officer Kevin Kane.

"I'm very lucky to receive this award and be on this team whose members really clicked," said Snell.

The 13-year Oakville resident said her children, are now 15 and 12, and "it was time for a change."

Snell applied to the Post Office and started work.

"We all work together as a team," said Snell, noting, "Gail was the driving force behind the team."

"I was the boss," laughed Lindsay, 44, a 40-year Oakville resident who lives in the Hopedale area.

For her part, Lindsay has worked in many post office facets, from sorting and relief clerk, to wicket and midnights.

"I've never been a letter carrier," she said.

Lindsay, who has also previously picked up a silver and a bronze award in the annual Post Office Olympics, said, "This was a lot of hard work, but everyone on the team had the same goal. That's about the first time in my 27 years that all of us had the same goal."

The team picked up a gala dinner, a lapel pin, picture frame and a trophy.



Donna Snell (left) and Gail Lindsay were recently honoured by Canada Post for their performance at the Oakville unit.

Speak your mind on Halton Region's strategic plan

The Regional Municipality of Halton is inviting all Halton residents to provide their input in the development of the Region's new Strategic Plan tonight.

The Strategic Plan will be a working document that will set the direction and outline the goals and objectives Regional Council will seek to achieve over the next two and half years. Among the issues the Plan will address are: transportation, environment, growth management, rural issues, inter-governmental coordination, health promotion, emergency services and social and community services including social housing and long-term care.

Further information on the Region's Strategic Plan is available on the Region's website at: <http://www.region.halton.on.ca>

The meeting will run from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., in the Auditorium, Halton Regional Centre, 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville. For more information contact Arvin Prasad, Senior Policy Advisor at 905-825-6000 ext. 7769.

Catholic Board passes \$157-m 2001-02 budget

The Halton Catholic District School Board has passed its \$157-million budget for the 2001-02 school year.

The budget consists of \$134.4 million worth of operating expenses (roughly \$113.1 million of that will be salaries and benefits) plus \$22.6 million of capital related to pupil accommodation.

"The Board is pleased that it has managed to achieve a balanced budget despite the many constraints imposed by the regulations and limited funding in relation to the many real needs that had to be considered in arriving at the final estimates," said Board chair Al Bailey. "Although the new flexibility in use of available funds is appreciated in principle, the reality faced by the Board was that most of it was needed to provide for the staffing needed related to increasing enrollment with the balance substantially applied to cover the shortfall in transportation funding."

Board Director of Education Fred Sweeney expressed relief that a balanced budget estimate was achieved. He noted several obstacles including finding \$600,000 for reclaimed grants which the Ministry initially paid in 1998 and an additional \$800,000 to fund the start-up of two new secondary schools (including Oakville's Holy Trinity) and a pair of new elementary schools opening in 2002.

Sweeney voiced his concern, however, over the fact that there will be no new funding for Special Education until 2003 and over the lack of sufficient funding for the new curriculum required in Grades 11 and 12. The results of this have been reduced initiatives in technology, curriculum and staff development to levels "that may make it difficult to meet the Ministry's program expectations."

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Ken Quiggan, Director
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