

Focus



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The Sparks lead the parade into Kinoak Arena for the 72 Bronte District Girl Guides advancement ceremony. **BELOW**, Brownie Micheline Ferguson receives her badges.



Surprise honours for two Guide leaders

By Karen Robbins
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

At a ceremony held last Wednesday at Kinoak Arena for 72 Bronte District Girl Guides who were advancing to the next level, two dedicated adult volunteers received the recognition they deserve.

Donna Cooper, 53, who is the District Commissioner for Bronte, was awarded her 35-year pin and Janet Von Zuben, 58, the District Treasurer, received her 20-year pin.

Cooper, who was very surprised by the award, started out in the organization as a Girl Guide herself. She is in her third term as district commissioner and for 10 years she acted as camp advisor. As well, she was a Guide and Pathfinder leader.

Cooper has even done some travelling with the Guides visiting Mexico and Europe.

But her particular interest is camping. "I love teaching camp skills," she said. "I love the kids and I love to see that they get the opportunity to have fun."

Her years of service have taught her a lot. "Life does change. Children change and attitudes change so it's been very interesting," she said.

Von Zuben enjoys watching the girls in the program grow up. "I like to see them develop from a Spark right through to becoming adults," she said.

"I have a lot of women working with me who used to be my Guides, so it's nice to see them advance through the different levels and become a leader."

Like Cooper, Von Zuben also acted as commissioner of the district for five years. She started as an Explorer until a neighbor got her into Guiding.

Over the years, she has been a Guide leader and a Pathfinder leader. She and Cooper also act as deputy commissioners training new leaders and helping units get established.

Von Zuben has stuck with Guides for so long because the organization offers children an alternative perspective of how to live.

"The program offers things that children don't use as much anymore. Nowadays everything kids do is connected to TV, whereas this program is outdoors, getting to know your community," she said.

The advancement ceremony takes place once a year. Advancing this year were 24 Sparks, 41 Brownies and 8 Guides.

The ceremony had an Olympic theme with David Foster's music playing as the girls paraded into the arena and hula hoops forming the shape of the Olympic symbol on the floor.



Photos by Peter C. McCusker

Donna Cooper receives her 35-year pin. **LEFT**: Janet Von Zuben, recipient of a 20-year pin. **BELOW**: a group of Sparks; and **BOTTOM**: parent photographers.



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