

## 'Commitment' needed downtown

Whitby's downtown area has "tremendous potential" but will need the commitment of its merchants to realize it, according to

resource team members now drawing up a final study report.

Stephan Lauer, from the Main Street program of Heritage Canada

Foundation, says the downtown is strong on history and "original fabric" but needs storefront upgrading, better streetscapes and more open space.

"It (downtown) should make people feel they are coming home, said Lauer at a Downtown Business Improvement Area meeting last week. He said a place to socialize, such as a rink or bandshell or park, would provide that attraction to the downtown.

Another resource team member who studied the downtown, Cathy Fox of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, said Whitby has done "above and beyond" what other towns with BIA programs have done.

Also offering a glimpse of the final report to be released this summer, Fox said Whitby has historical development as well as economic, good communication between the BIA and the Town, a full-time resource person; and response to promotions.

She said as a local shopping area, the downtown would do best to attract specialty stores and become "more family-oriented."

Lauer said the final report will deal with a "whole slew of items" that will provide the framework to guide the BIA over future years.

"Much remains to be done - we have barely scratched the surface," said retiring BIA chairman Ed Buffett of downtown work and promotion.

## Students sell coupons

Students across the province will be out in force this summer selling \$3 coupon booklets as part of the Help a Student program.

Run by Ontario Student Services, the company employs students province-wide.

Les Birta of Whitby is area manager for Durham Region.

"This job is good experience for the high school student. They get to learn salesmanship, money control and basic administrative skills," says Birta, who is entering his third year as a business student at Ryerson.

Birta takes seven students out five nights a week, for three hours each night.

He says the students, if they sell 15 booklets in three hours, can earn

\$6 an hour. A bonus of \$5 for every five booklets past 15 is also offered.

"It's not uncommon for a student to sell 20 or 25 booklets in that three hours," says Birta.

Some of the coupons in the booklet offer discounts at places like Harveys, Dairy Queen and Loblaws.

"There are 20 coupons in the book and by using one or two, people can get their \$3 back," says Birta.

Birta and his student salesmen have been going now for the past eight weeks and in that time he says they have sold 3,200 booklets.

He says he still needs about three more salesmen. He can be reached at 668-4852 or applications can be picked up at the student employment office.

## Window dressers open shop in east Whitby

If you have an arch window, Bonnie Wilson and Kerstin Johnson would find it a challenge - for their window-dressing abilities.

They are the owners of Somerset Window Dressings Inc., which opened June 13 at 1121 Dundas St. E., Whitby.

The store specializes in window coverings and decorating ideas.

"We appeal to every market - from apartments to houses," says Wilson.

Both Whitby residents worked at a local window dressing store where Wilson was manager before going into business together.

"We've known each other for four years and get along really well. I like the decorating end and Kirsten handles the business end," says Wilson.

Wilson worked with the contractor to come up with the overall design for the store.

They order most of their dressings locally from Toronto, and their sheers are from Italy. They do free consultations in the home and will offer decorating ideas.

Wilson says a couple of popular dressings right now are valances and the double treatment, which is a vertical blind with drapery treatment over it.

Eventually they will be branching out into accessories, which will include stained glass and folk art.

The pair will have a booth at a bridal show in Pickering in January, where they will feature some of their sample dressings.

Wilson is originally from a small town outside of Ottawa, and likes the small town feel of Whitby.

"A lot of people have been very helpful to us. I'm very glad we opened in Whitby," says Wilson.



DUSTIN MIROWSKI receives a "doggie balloon" from Rainbow the Clown during an end-of-school barbecue at Kinder Corner day care in Whitby last week.

Free Press photo

## 'Fun learning' at day care

By DONNA DONALDSON

Children at Kinder Corner Day Care, at 63 Thickson Rd. S. in Whitby celebrated their year-end on June 25 with a family barbecue.

Festivities were held in the school playground, which included magic tricks performed by Rainbow the Clown, and the senior class receiving their diplomas.

The day care is owned by Sandra and Bill Barriault of Oshawa, and will be celebrating its second anniversary in September.

Sandra Barriault says the school provides "quality early learning programs" for children.

"Our backgrounds in education makes us aware of the importance of a good start in the formative years, 18 months to six years old," says Barriault, who has been teaching at Anderson CVI for six years.

Her husband has taught at Vanier High School in Oshawa for 10 years.

"We also believe that preschoolers should not be in a school setting, but in an environment where learning is fun, and where there is plenty of time for unscheduled free play," she says.

The day care has nine full-time

staff, which consist of four early childhood education teachers.

Other staff members include teacher's assistants, part-time evening help and supervisor Angela Twining, "the person that energizes the centre," says Barriault.

Kinder Corner offers the children French classes, arts and crafts, gymnastics, dance, songs, finger play and computer awareness to name a few of the many programs.

"You would be amazed at how proficient a three-year-old will be on a computer," says Barriault.

The children are divided into three groups - toddlers, juniors and seniors. This is done, Barriault says, because a two-year-old is not interested in what a five-year-old is interested in and vice versa.

The children visit Sunnycrest Nursing Home once a week, and participate in crafts, sing-songs and talking with senior citizens.

"It's tremendous for both the children and the seniors. The children have adopted grandparents, and the seniors enjoy spending time with young people," says Barriault.

Other activities for the children

include field trips, backing, movies, an annual Christmas concert, theme days and theme weeks.

One theme was 'Silly Week,' where the children did everything from wearing pajamas to class or their clothes backward.

The theme that Barriault says went over really well for both teachers and children was 'Tacky Tourist Day.'

She credit the staff for any success and says staff turnover is not a problem, thus providing a stable environment for children.

The centre was zoned institutional when the Barriaults bought the building, and is licensed for 46 children. The Barriaults would like to expand the facility in the future.

For now there are openings for toddlers and seniors in September. There is a waiting list for juniors, and parents with young children are encouraged to put their names on the waiting list.

The children of Kinder Corner were featured on CFTO's Heartbeat recently for their weekly visits to their adopted grandparents at Sunnycrest.



BONNIE WILSON and Kerstin Johnson are the owners of Somerset Window Dressings Inc.

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