

# Bodnar 'thankful' for support

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Bodnar also coached hockey at the juvenile level for two years while still serving on other volunteer community organizations.

In 1998 he was recruited by the Bennett Centre to develop a long-term plan for the lands owned by the Bennett Centre. The goal was to provide an adult residential community offering a continuum of care ranging from total independence through to supportive housing. He was formally elected to the board of directors of the Bennett Centre in 1999 and became chairman of the land use committee to consider use of the property.

Research indicated that seniors in Georgetown required accommodations where they could live independently and the Life Lease concept—a new concept for Georgetown—was introduced.

Since 2000 Bodnar has devoted much of his time to bring the concept to completion, obtaining all of the necessary approvals.

Bodnar said the real challenge was the Bennett Centre didn't have any staff members with experience in developing such a project,



Georgetown's Citizen of the Year, Ernie Bodnar, poses with the model of The Gallery at Bennett Village that is on display in the Georgetown Market Place.

Photo by Ted Brown

so much of the work fell on the shoulders of the volunteers.

"It was by no means a one-man show," stressed Bodnar.

He said the "get it done committee" that met weekly with the contractor for the project consisted of Linda Dawson, Bob Austin, Paul Skinner and himself.

"We were pretty well it, charged with making all the decisions," said Bodnar.

Construction of the Gallery began in 2007 and early last year the first residents moved in.

Bodnar said there were sev-

eral challenges, including having trades not want to work on the fringes of the GTA, unprecedented demand for building trades during the construction period, lining up the financing for the project and deficiencies in construction.

"With the patience of the purchasers we have been able to get through most of it," said Bodnar.

"I'm so thankful for the people I had with me and support of the board chairs," he added.

The Gallery is only part of the plan. Bodnar and the other dedicated committee members are currently planning the next building that will provide living accommodations for seniors who require a higher level of care.

"Ernie has worked non-stop on this project for 12 years, all as a dedicated volunteer. His extensive professional background has benefited the community immensely, and this project caps over 50 years of helping the citizens of Georgetown," said Penrice.

The Lions Club will honour Bodnar at an awards dinner March 30 at Georgetown Lions Hall. Tickets can be purchased at Carpet Barn or by calling Penrice at 905-873-8469.



## Cruisin' weather

Adam Jamrok, 4, and sister Julia, 5, of Georgetown were tearing it up on Main Street Saturday as scooters, bicycles and Rollerblades were brought out of the closet as balmy temperatures blanketed southern Ontario.

Photo by Calvin Dyke




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