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My final summer as the Acton BIA Summer Student

By Jennifer MacDonald

For those of you who do not know me, I'm the redheaded girl you see watering the hanging baskets lining the streets of Mill and Main. My name is Jennifer MacDonald, and I've been the Acton BIA summer student for three consecutive summers. My experience working with Josey Bonnette and for the Acton BIA has been more enjoyable than I could have asked for when searching for a summer job. I hold the Acton BIA summer student position very close to my heart as I grew up in Acton and take pride in being an Actonite. There is a lot more that goes into this job besides watering the flowers, and I am very thankful to have been given the opportunity to be involved in the organization of community events and the beautification of the town.

As I'm sure many students would agree, the summer flew by very quickly. Josey did her best to ensure we were busy everyday; whether it was working on planning an event downtown, pulling 5 inch weeds from the parkette or putting one of her crazy (and many) projects into action! My experience working alongside Josey as an organizer to the Acton BIA summer events taught me the values of hard work ethic and the importance of going the extra mile to ensure the people of Acton are pleased with the town they chose to do business in or reside in. Both of these characteristics are executed in the projects and event organization of Acton BIA manager Josey Bonnette, who is not only my boss, but a friend and a neighbour. The thing I love best about working with Josey is that she works alongside me as her summer student through everything. Between picking up garbage and climbing ladders, she is not afraid to get her hands dirty with me (literally).

We kicked off summer in Acton by hanging the baskets and planting the flower beds. After hanging over 50 baskets at approximately 40-pounds each, it is safe to say this job not only helps to pay my tuition but also substitutes as a fitness regime. Following planting the flowers was the start of the Acton Farmers' Market. Personally, the Farmers' Market is my favourite weekly event because I believe it is vital for the economic health of the community and the local food system. It not only helps local farmers remain sustainable, it also brings together a share of resources that otherwise would not be

accessible within the community. The final event I was involved in organizing was the 23rd annual Leathertown Festival. The Leathertown Festival took months to plan, between communicating with vendors and local merchants, to hiring entertainment and bringing together resources from the Town of Halton Hills to ensure the day was successful. Josey and I ran around planning like mad women for many weeks prior to the event but nothing was more satisfying than seeing the festival in action on a sunny day with thousands of people enjoying themselves downtown Acton.

The opportunity to work as the Acton BIA summer student allowed me to meet many wonderful people. Within the next two weeks I will start my first year of graduate studies at McMaster, where the library walls will slowly be enclosing in on me once again, but I will not forget the familiar smiling faces of the people in Acton — a town that will always be known as "home" for me no matter where I am.

This is my last summer working as the BIA summer student, and I am very thankful to have been given the position to work with Josey. We had a great summer working together, and drank more coffee than two women should ever drink.



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