

Ladies Night a win-win-win event Business in Halton Hills inspired to grow by doing business in China



Brett (left), Val, Bill and Terresa Manes, with Meghan Van-Asseldonk at Acton Home Hardware's Ladies' Night

By: Vivien Fleisher

The Manes family, owners of Acton Home Hardware for over 21 years, hosted their popular 'Ladies Night' last Wednesday. The whole family—Val and Bill, son Brett and daughter Terresa—was on hand for the two-hour event, which

is in honour this year of Isaac and Jesse's Journey in support of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Isaac's mother Meghan Van-Asseldonk was there in person, attending the night for the first time.

As Val explained, the impetus for these events came about 15 years ago when they were searching

for ways to attract customers. Besides great demos, free gifts, raffles and refreshments, the continued support for four-year-old Isaac—the town hosted Isaac's 'Trek for Treats' on October 28—who attends junior kindergarten at St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School makes the evening a win-win-win.

BIA holding interviews this week for new manager

By: Harry Rudolfs

With the departure of Sheena Switzer to the Georgetown BIA, the Acton BIA has begun the process of hiring a new manager. Applications for the position closed last Friday and the hiring committee is conducting interviews this week.

According to BIA chair Dana Selby, the committee is looking for a "dedicated and responsible individual who can continue implementing the phases of our strategic plan...

including streetscaping, beautification, initiatives to fill vacant commercial spaces, as well as marketing, revamping our design/logo and website."

Selby also stressed that communication and interpersonal skills are essential, "as well as time management, organizational skills and event planning."

The Acton BIA has had three managers in the last few years, but Selby doesn't think this has had a negative effect. "There were opportunities that

became available for both Beth and Sheena that couldn't be passed up," she said. "There is still a very good relationship with the Board and Beth—in fact, she has volunteered to help with the hiring committee—and we wish Sheena the best in her new venture... We are excited with respect to the positive direction that the BIA is going."

A half-day event on learning how to do business in China was held last Friday. The sold-out event focused on business expansion opportunities through bilateral trade and investment with China, Canada's second-largest trading partner. Featured keynote remarks were given by Mayor Rick Bonnette, Senator Victor Oh, Mr. Defeng—Commercial Counselor of the Chinese Consulate General in Toronto—as well as three different discussion panels representing industry, business services, and government.

John Pascual of Hayward Gordon, a Halton Hills manufacturer of custom-designed industrial pumps and mixers, shared valuable lessons and resources on both importing and exporting with China. Hayward Gordon's story of success with China was insightful to companies considering a first trading venture, as well as those looking to expand their business interests in China.

Mayor Bonnette outlined the steps the Town has taken to enact a sister-city agreement with Wenjiang, China, and the early action items and many successes achieved to date.

"Halton Hills is well on its way in forming the necessary friendships and networks to assist our businesses in taking full advantage of the economic development opportunities



Damian Szybalski (left), Manager of Economic Development, Innovation and Culture at the Town of Halton Hills and business panel moderator; guest speaker Mayor Rick Bonnette; John Pascual, Hayward Gordon and business panelist. - Submitted photo

offered by China," he said, adding, "We also offer opportunities to China-based businesses that are interested in investing in our region."

Given Canada's relatively small size in the global economy, building a strong relationship with China will result in bilateral opportunities in economic development and foreign direct investment, in sectors such as renewable energy and sustainability, advanced manufacturing, culture, arts and tourism, agriculture and education.

Expanding opportunities for local businesses to enter international markets such as China is part of the Town's comprehensive economic development strategy to ensure that Halton Hills is competitive in the global marketplace.

The business forum was co-hosted by the Town of Halton Hills, Town of Oakville and Halton Region.

For more information on the Town of Halton Hills' Wenjiang Action Plan, visit the sister city webpage: www.haltonhills.ca/SisterCity

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