

PROGRAM OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

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conomic recovery and resilience plan, helps businesses improve their online presence.

Hartung was among the close to 70 small businesses to benefit from the program that saw the town award a total of \$50,000 in grants. Now the town has received another \$45,000 to continue the program.

"COVID-19 has caused significant hardship for our small businesses," said Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette.

"Enhanced online tools are critical to assisting our businesses in interacting with their customers and to generate and maintain much-needed revenue."

To be eligible, businesses must have a physical storefront and fewer than 50 employees. Grants can be used toward new websites, hardware or soft-

"In a very polite way, they told me my site was a little dated."

- Darlene Hartung

ware.

A digital service squad will also be available to help with social media, setting up business profiles and providing website and e-commerce support.

The deadline for businesses to apply for a digital transformation grant is Oct. 31.

After applying and being approved, Hartung met for an evaluation.

"In a very polite way, they told me my site was a little dated," Hartung said with a laugh.

She worked with a website designer and builder to create a new site. She said town staff were very helpful whenever she had questions about the program.

Hartung, who specializes in photorealistic draw-



Graham Paine/Metroland

Local businesses like those in the downtown core are eligible for funding for the Digital Main Street program.

ings and also gives lessons to kids and adults, said her business has increased by 60 per cent and most of the spots in her classes have been filled.

"It's been hugely significant," said Hartung.

"Sending people to the old site, it didn't look modern. It didn't really reflect what I do. There was no mention of lessons. I was probably losing customers because of it."

Now as she approaches

her second year at Williams Mill, her evaluation is complete.

"There's no question, I'll be keeping the studio," she said.

STORY BEHIND THE

STORY: When a second round of Digital Main Street funding was announced, we wanted to examine how businesses had benefited from the program the first time around.

REGION EXPANDS VACCINE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN

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Halton Public Health is expanding eligibility for the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine to children who are turning 12 in 2021, in accordance with provincial

guidelines.

Those born in 2009 can receive their first dose of the vaccine, followed by a second dose after a minimum interval of 21 days, at walk-in clinics located at Gellert Community Centre, 10241 Eighth Line in

Halton Hills, FirstOntario Arts Centre, 1010 Main St. E. in Milton, Compass Point Bible Church, 1500 Kerns Rd. in Burlington and St. Volodymyr Cultural Centre, 1280 Dundas St. W. in Oakville, as well as many Halton pharmacies

and select primary care offices. The province has also approved third doses for particularly vulnerable people, however, Halton's public health department is not yet offering these at its community vaccination clinics.



Graham Paine/Metroland

Children turning 12 this year are now eligible for vaccine.



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