

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

Elayne Tanner

by Donna Danielli

When she opened her private practice almost a decade ago, Elayne Tanner, Counselor and Psychotherapist, also made a commitment to volunteering her time and efforts wherever her new community needed her. That same community gladly took the opportunity to thank her in April, awarding her Milton Chamber of Commerce's Business Woman of the Year.

"It was very surprising," admitted Tanner. "So much of my work is so confidential, and clients who are pleased with my work don't often speak of it freely because it is so personal."

Tanner, whose office is located on the grounds of her home in rural Milton, counsels individuals, couples, children and families. She has over 20 years experience in counselling men and women who have concerns about substance abuse, anger management, marital problems, sexual abuse, divorce issues, relationship difficulties and more. She is one of a handful of ADD Coalition individuals who host and arrange a conference in Halton every two years focussing on Attention Deficit Disorder.

As well as being on the Board of Directors of Deborah's Home, Tanner runs a therapeutic support group for the Halton Trauma Centre (formerly the Halton Centre for Childhood Sexual Abuse), and volunteers her time with the North Halton Citizens' Cultural Awareness Society, which she helped found to increase public awareness of racism and racist attitudes.

"I'm very passionate about treating people fairly and equally. I have this vision of us all working together to build a safety net. I

know we're not going to save the world, but we can save a small part of it, and wouldn't it be wonderful to build a society where people are valued and supported?"

Ironically, it's her success as a therapist that has become a double edged sword for Tanner. Her expertise is in such demand that she isn't able to be as involved with the Cultural Awareness Society as she has in the past. Her strong dedication to her clients involves long and unusual hours.

"I have to be available when the client is. Sometimes that's seven in the morning and sometimes it's nine o'clock at night. I try to meet people's schedules and needs."

Every client receives Tanner's complete focus during a session, and a full day of appointments can leave the mother of two emotionally exhausted.

"Sometimes I feel like I can barely walk, that I'm almost empty and drained inside. My husband, Uldis Bernhards, is simply wonderful. He can replenish me at those times when I don't have the energy left even to think or talk. He has always supported me 100 per cent."

Tanner recalls early days when she had just begun the practice in the building that had been rented as an apartment on her property.

"We didn't have a lot of money for furniture, so whenever I had a client coming, my husband and sons would have to take the living room furniture down there, and bring it back to the house when we had company coming," she says with a laugh.

After 10 long years, success has come through hard work for Elayne Tanner and the furniture has stopped its migration. In her

acceptance speech at the Chamber of Commerce Awards, she referenced the long journey to the place she is now. When in grade 10, she was advised to quit school, and admits she didn't think at that point that post secondary school was much of an option.

"People limit your potential when they tell you that you can't do something. There's no limit to your potential if you don't set one or let someone else set it for you."

Tanner opted to stay in school, and went on to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She followed that with a Bachelor of Social Work, with distinction, and as the top student of her class in York University, gave the valedictory address. A scholarship to Wilfrid Laurier followed, and Tanner received her Master of Social Work (advanced standing), with distinction in 1992. She has also attended course in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, Intensive Sex Therapy training, and is a certified hypnotherapist. Before turning to private practice, Tanner spent 16 years working in a professional capacity for such organizations as Halton Children's Aid Society, Toronto General Hospital, York Central Association for the Developmentally Delayed and the Workers Compensation Board.

"When you work with an agency, you have to charge what they tell you to, and work the hours they set for you." Private practice gives her the freedom to adjust her schedule to match her clients and in some instances, adjust her fee for lower-income clients.

Through her practice, Tanner has personally chosen associates who are contracted for specific tasks within their own area of spe-



Elayne Tanner holds award presented to her by Milton Chamber of Commerce

Photo by Donna Danielli

cialty, such as custody access assessment, mediation or specified groups.

"Clients can take my referrals with confidence, because they know they can trust my judgement. I feel it's my responsibility to give to the community and not just take

from it. I live here and I want to live in a community that I feel is welcoming to others. If I'm going to talk the talk, then I had better be prepared to walk the walk."

Anyone interested in the contacting Elayne Tanner is encouraged to phone 905-854-0801.

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Patio	Neil Cotton & the Hawksnest Band, 1 pm
Patio	Kick Ass Knights Band 9 pm
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HALTON REGION NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Campbellville Settlement Area – Groundwater Investigation

WHERE: LION'S COMMUNITY CENTRE, GUELPH LINE
(south of railway tracks on the west side)

WHEN: Thursday, June 14, 2001



TIME: 7:00 to 9:00 pm (presentation at 7:30)

The Region of Halton and the Town of Milton are in the process of finalizing an investigation on the groundwater resources within the Hamlet of Campbellville and its surroundings. Members of the public are invited to attend the final public meeting where our consultant will present the findings of the study and discuss the implications for the Hamlet of Campbellville.

Halton Region Health Department staff will also be in attendance providing information and advice about well water quality.

For additional information please contact:

<p>Mr. Dave Ketcheson Environmental Engineer Azimuth Environmental Consulting 111 Saunders Road, Unit 2 Barrie, ON L4M 6E7 Phone: 705-721-8451 Fax: 705-721-8926 Email: azimuth@links-loo.on.ca</p>	<p>Mr. Steve Holysh Hydrogeologist Regional Municipality of Halton 1151 Bronte Road Oakville, ON L6M 3L1 Phone: 905-825-6161 Ext. 7134 Toll Free: 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866) Fax: 905-825-8822 email: holyshs@region.halton.on.ca</p>
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