

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE
LOIS FRASER

By GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Lois Fraser is a driving force behind many community projects and activities in Georgetown and Halton Hills. Over the years, she has officially helped the Town with the Recreation and Parks' Master Plan by gathering donations in the late '80s for the Civic Centre, and by serving on the organizing committee of Localmotion, which raised funds for the Gellert Community Centre and the Mold-Masters Sportsplex.

Every year, her company, Fraser Direct Distribution Services, holds a book sale to benefit local charities. In 1995 she was named Citizen of the Year. A few years later she was awarded a Paul Harris fellowship by the Rotary Club.

But it is the arts and youth that have the biggest place in her heart. She has chaired Arts Alive since it was founded 17 years ago to bring art and entertainment



to the John Elliott Theatre, which is named after her father. Her most notable achievement, however, may be her voluntary involvement with the Georgetown Children's Chorus. In 1992 she agreed to help Dale Wood start the organization, and "for 10 solid years, the two of us ran the whole thing," says Mr. Wood. "There is only a handful of people anywhere in the world who can do what she can do. Whatever Lois agrees to do, she gives 150,000 per cent of her time."

"I like to support causes that are local, involve children and have a lasting effect," Mrs. Fraser says. "I am sure that kids will remember the songs and their whole choir experience. Several concerts, we have done have thrilled me. Taking 75 kids to Europe in 1998 including a memorial service at Vimy Ridge was my volunteer career highlight. Our choir's participation in the annual Remembrance services is always very rewarding."

Mrs. Fraser wishes she could do more for the community, and

mentions the renewal at Remembrance Park and the creation of Dominion Gardens as two projects that she would have liked to have been more involved with. To the question of why she does so much community work, she replies, "It all comes down to doing your share, and setting an example for your children. I feel strongly that parents should contribute financially, if possible, to their children's activities, and even more importantly, donate their time."

Mrs. Fraser points out that it's often difficult to find leaders willing to take responsibility for projects. "If you've got gifts to share in the way of enthusiasm or leadership, then you need to say yes," she believes. "It's easy to feel frustrated when you look around and see other people contributing nothing, but that should never stop you from contributing personally. When you work on volunteer committees, you get to work

with other 'doers,' and generally I find they are my kind of people." Energy levels are becoming more of a challenge than finding time.

"It's really important not to burn out and to save your energy for the projects that really matter to you," she advises. "I used to try and do everything, but I'm being more selective now. My hardest part is letting go, as I tend to stay on a project for many years once I get started, mostly because I really like the people I work with."

In addition to community and charity work, Mrs. Fraser and her husband Al adopted a young boy from Romania into their family of four children.

"We felt we had the energy and experience to adopt a child," she explains. "When you have a lot of things to be grateful for, it makes sense to share. We support five kids through World Vision, but we wanted to do something more concrete: To help one child improve his life and at the same time show our children that we have a responsibility to help others."

Quilts of many colours

During the dark, dreary days of last winter, eight women (The Rainbow Makers based out of St. David's Church in Campbellville) stitched joy and life into 19 brightly-coloured quilts. These lovely pieces of artwork were donated on September 11 to Milton's chapter of Birthright. Janice Orr, Director of the Milton Chapter (right) accepted the gifts from The Rainbow Makers representatives (from left) Deb Drijber, Judy Hodges and Heather Peace.



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