

Sheridan Nurseries blooms with purchase of Weall and Cullen

Garden centre acquisition gives local firm 11 locations in the Greater Toronto Area

With its recent acquisition of Weall & Cullen garden centres, Sheridan Nurseries now has locations spanning east to west across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Sheridan, which has its head office on the Tenth Line in Georgetown, purchased Weall & Cullen's five locations in Whitby, North York, Scarborough, Markham and Mississauga, bringing the number of Sheridan retail locations to 11.

"The business focus, market and culture of the two organizations are remarkably similar," said Sheridan president Bill Stensson. "And this move is a positive step in providing GTA gardening customers with top quality retail garden centres and experienced, knowledgeable staff."

Weall and Cullen president Mark Cullen, one of Canada's best known TV and radio personalities on the subject of gardening, will stay on as official spokesperson for the Sheridan chain.

"The Sheridan organization stands for the very best quality horticultural services and products in this market and I am delighted to take on a new role to represent Sheridan Nurseries to the gardening public," said Cullen.

Cullen Miniature Gardens in Whitby will remain in the Cullen family, and Cullen will retain ownership of his wholesale business, Greendale, which supplies hard goods, such as garden hoses, to garden retailers.

As of May 1 Karl Stensson, senior-vice president of Sheridan took over responsibility for retail operations in the Weall & Cullen stores.

"May and June are the busiest months in our business, so the immediate focus is on ensuring that oper-

ations proceed smoothly, customers are satisfied and that staff can do their jobs well and with confidence."

After July 1, the Weall & Cullen stores will be renamed Sheridan Garden Centres and the employees will switch to Sheridan uniforms.

The combined companies employ 350 staff full-time and up to 1,000 during peak season.

A "small percentage" of head office jobs will be cut where there is overlap, Stensson said.



Sheridan Nurseries

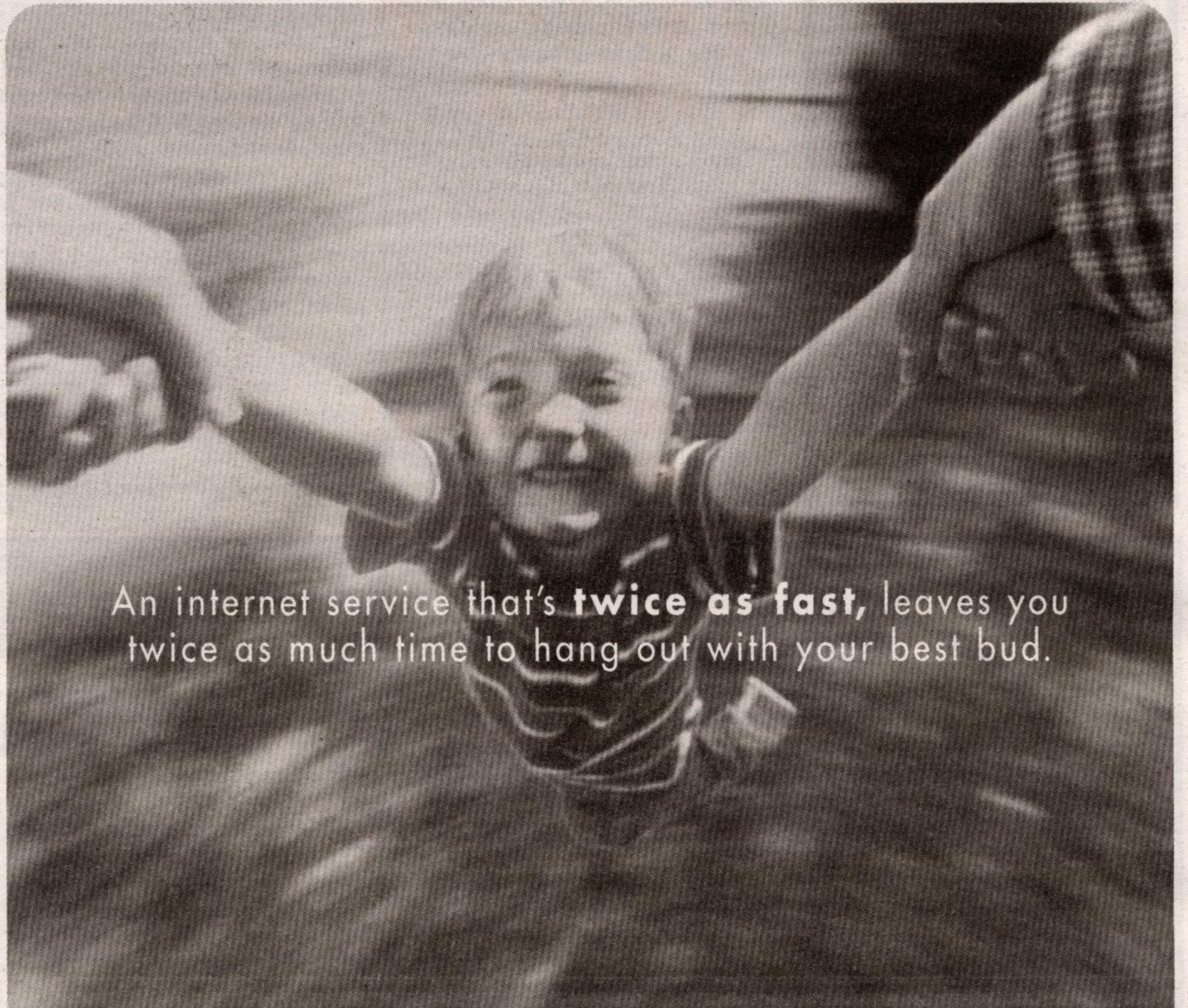
"We hope we'll be able to absorb some of those staff in our retail operations. It's always hard to get really good people in this industry."

Both companies are privately held and the value of the deal wasn't disclosed.

The Weall & Cullen name has been around since Mark's father bought the business from John Weall in 1947.

Sheridan Nurseries was founded in 1913 by an English couple, Howard and Lorrie Dunnington-Grubb, two landscape architects who set it up to supply plants to their business. Bill's father Herman Stensson, was their first nurseryman.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer with files from Torstar News Service



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