

Sobeys' green thumbs seek fruitful partnership

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Paul Gilchrist hopes to cultivate a new chapter for Sobeys' healthy community initiative. With the business's High Point Drive distribution centre set to close this coming winter, a new home is being sought for the approximately two-acre garden that resides at the southeast end of the warehouse's parking lot. "There's land out there that's not being used," said Gilchrist, who along with Ralph Burton oversees operations of the garden that was started in 2014 and has enjoyed great support from fellow employees, management and local businesses such as Home Hardware and Bronte Construction. "Ralph and I would do all the work. They (landowners) wouldn't have to do anything... just donate the land for a good cause."

That last comment refers to the 350 pounds of fresh veggies — including peppers, tomatoes, beans and squash — that were donated to Halton Women's Place and the Milton Sal-

vation Army food bank this year alone.

"It was our biggest harvest," noted Gilchrist, whose Sobeys crew has held a summer barbecue in conjunction with the garden project that's been well attended. "It's an important community effort that benefits a lot of people. It's been really meaningful, to be able to give back to the community."

For Gilchrist, the opportunity to help the local women's shelter is especially poignant, since a neighbour of his spent time there.

"You never know when someone you know will be in need."

Harvest donations, however, aren't the only positive impacts that have taken root from the garden, noted its chief green thumbs.

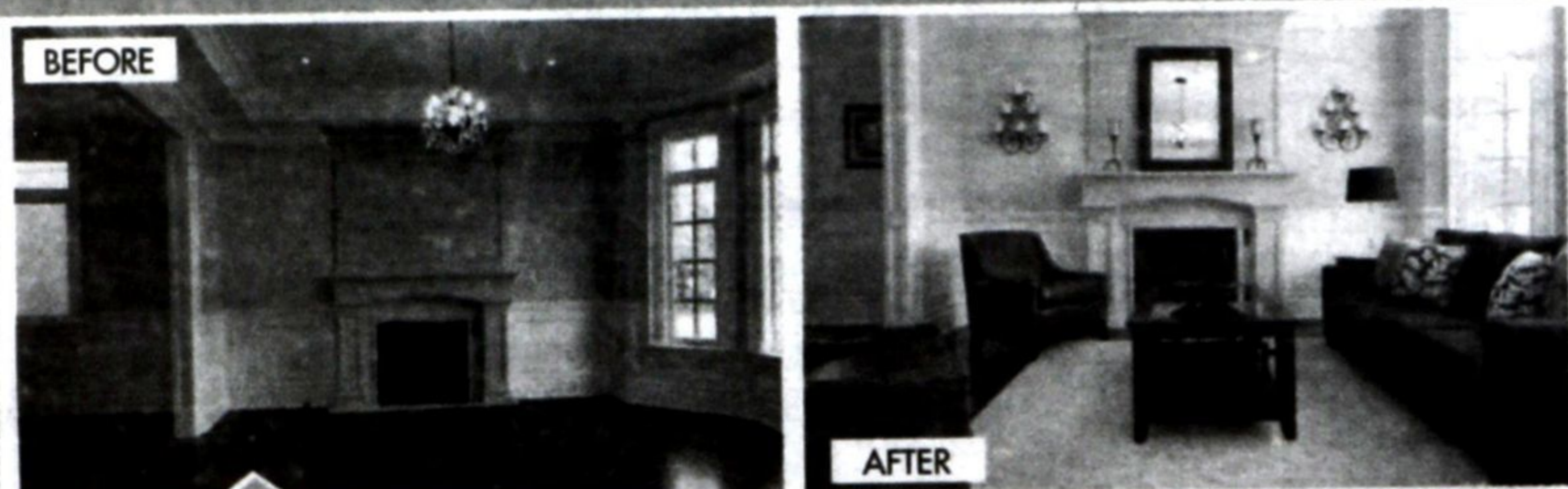
Said Gilchrist, "It's helped build a lot of relationships here in the warehouse. It's brought people together and taught a lot of them about healthy eating."

The gardeners are optimistic a new home can be found on a one- to two-acre plot. Potential partners are asked to contact Gilchrist at paul.gilchrist707@hotmail.com.



The two-acre garden at the Sobeys distribution centre is looking for a new home. Milton resident and Sobeys distribution centre employee Paul Gilchrist, photographed to the right of co-workers (from left) Mike Potvin, D.J. Brown, Ralph Burton and Kaitlin Gordon, is leading the charge and hopes the healthy community initiative, which provides fresh produce to Halton Women's Place and the Salvation Army food bank, can continue. *Champion file photo*

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Date **Wednesday October 26, 2016**
Time **7:30 PM**

Seating is limited. Reserved seating is recommended.
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