

Crafty lady is in business

By KATE GILDERDALE

Pat Montgomery's annual craft show, now a two-day event attracting hundreds of visitors, started with a small group of friends who got together and showed each other various crafts they had made.

When she first moved into town, she started getting together with other young mothers in the area for a coffee meeting every other week.

Babysitting would be at one house, with people taking turns to host the gathering.

"At Christmas time we decided to bring anything we were working on to give as gifts and to show each other what we'd been doing," recalls Pat. "I was doing macrame and a couple of the others said they would like to learn how to do it, so I started teaching at the kitchen table once a week."

The following year, Pat suggested they display their work. "I said, let's do it at my house because I have the room," she said. "We did it for the neighborhood and it just kept getting bigger, with more and more people asking if they could come."

As the show evolved, it began to attract craftspeople from other areas like Markham, Pickering and Toronto.

"The more these people did, the less I had to do," smiles Pat gratefully.

She is careful to select a good variety of high quality crafts for the show. "One neighbor said she did all her Christmas shopping at the show, because we offer something handmade and different."

Organizing the show has become a major undertaking and instead of charging people to display their work, Pat asks everyone to bring a tray of squares or baked goods to offer visitors.

Realtor Mary Jean Sider supplies coffee for guests to enjoy while they admire the crafts.

The show also helps to raise money for Stouffville Christian School, where Pat is a busy volunteer.

She puts a dish beside the coffee and refreshments for donations, and also receives contributions from most of the people who

display their crafts over the two-day period.

"It's a nice way to raise funds for the school, because there's no pressure involved," she points out.

Visiting Pat's spacious home on the day before the show, it's hard to find a place to sit down, with every surface a sea of rugs, wreaths, dolls, flowers and hundreds of other beautifully crafted items.

"There are 33 girls supplying crafts," she estimates. "We get more people coming to the show in the evenings now, but when we started it was only during the day. I would say maybe 300 people came last year."

Pat first became interested in crafts when she was a Grade 1 teacher. "I started crocheting and made a little poncho with squares. I took it to school and someone asked me to make one for them," she recalled.

She agreed to do it, and ended up making a total of 35 for different people.

When her daughter was born, she stopped teaching and took up macrame. Among other things, she now makes wreaths, baskets and displays of flowers.

She took evening classes with Bunny Burton and now works two days a week at Bunny's Flowers.

She admits that the show causes a certain amount of havoc at home.

"My husband travels a lot in his job and he usually picks this week to be away," she smiles. Son Andy, 11, likes to contribute to the show; this year he made chocolate clusters.

Although the show is fun, Pat will be happy to get her house back to normal and catch up on her sleep since she's up until the wee hours on nights before the show, finishing her own crafts and organizing displays.

She also finds time to help out with Home Support and runs a singing group for 60 children at her church.

At school she does hot dog lunches and helps to organize fund raising.

"I was involved with garbage bag sales, and now I'm known as the bag lady at school," she concludes with a grin.



Pat Montgomery is one of the key players behind the little crafts show that grew. What was once a get-together of local women who share an interest in handmade crafts is now an event that attracts hundreds of visitors.

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The Uxbridge Cottage Hospital Auxiliary is holding its annual bazaar Saturday, Nov. 5 in the lower auditorium of Trinity United Church.

Home-baking, sewing, knitting, crafts and gifts will be featured from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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