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Warm welcome to town

By BRUCE STAPLEY
She's a one woman welcoming committee, public relations person, and community directory who has personally introduced approximately 1,500 newcomers to Stouffville in her 12 years as the town's "Official Greeter."

The Welcome Wagon representative for Stouffville knows what its basket of free gifts from area businesses is always a sign to new residents that they are indeed welcome and wanted in their new town.

"I try to find out their different interests and hobbies. I carry all the community directories and guides, a letter from the Mayor, a booklet on York Region, church directories, lists of service clubs, and Go Train timetables."

"My husband Allen used to be a bank manager, and we moved four or five times across Ontario," recalls Mrs. Darling. "So I knew what it was like to go around a new town."

And her reward has gone beyond those of most regular jobs. "I've met some of my best friends through Welcome Wagon. I've met people from all walks of life, and from places as far away as Europe who have moved in."

In Pembroke, I had a Welcome Wagon visit, and the hostess had a lot of things in her basket and told me of places to shop, etc."

And she says she has welcomed many of the welcome families to the same house throughout the years.

Twelve years after taking over her own Welcome Wagon territory, Mrs. Darling's dedication and sincerity have gained her a reputation as one of the top greeters in the province.

After working on her own for 10 years, Mrs. Darling took on a helper two years ago. Eleanor Dickens, also of Stouffville, assists Mrs. Darling by making many of the welcome visits, as well as pitching in with the paper work.

In 1987, Mrs. Darling was among four York Region Welcome Wagon Hostesses of the Year to represent Ontario.

"She's ideal for the job," says Mrs. Darling. "She's friendly and outgoing, and she enjoys meeting people."

While she started with only nine sponsors in 1977, she now brings to the door gifts and tokens from 40 Stouffville area businesses. Her basket is ranked second in all of Ontario and fourth in Canada, in terms of value.

The arrangement has helped Mrs. Dickens continue to tend to her family and her interests, while earning a few extra dollars.

There's a voucher for a fish and chips dinner, a breakfast platter for four, a wheel alignment, a free car wash, and a host of other assorted goodies to introduce the new resident to the local merchants.

"I can schedule my housework and my other hobbies around my work with Dianne," says Mrs. Dickens.

But she sees her role as much more than being just public relations for the business community.

Both women claim a high degree of satisfaction in being the first person to greet Stouffville area newcomers.

"They're always tickled with the basket," says Mrs. Dickens. "And they are impressed with the friendliness of the town."



Dianne Darling (left) has been Stouffville's Welcome Wagon hostess for the past 12 years. She's assisted by Eleanor Dickens and the basket they deliver to newcomers includes 40 complimentary items.

PUBLIC NOTICE GARBAGE COLLECTION

Monday, August 7 is a Civic Holiday

For the week of August 7 - 11 only, garbage pickups normally scheduled on Monday will take place on Tuesday.

Garbage pickups normally scheduled on Tuesday will take place on Wednesday.

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- 17-1003: Communications package includes CT-200 portable cellular phone, antenna, phone has 98-number memory, handset-located controls and built-in speaker/monitor. Includes portable battery pack (17-203) and 2 batteries (23-181). **save \$873** 1199.00 (Reg. sep. items 2072.80)
- 12-718: AM/FM pocket portable radio with ear-phone antenna. **save \$6** 15.95 (24.95)
- 44-8301: Memory 6-pack. Quality 90-minute audio cassettes. **save 33%** 9.95 (14.95)
- 22-185: 23-range digital VOM has full auto. polarity, "beep" continuity test. **save \$30** 69.95 (99.95)
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