

The Bloom Is On The Orchid



Betty Zwicker's prolific orchid has been carefully tended by her and her husband, Don, in the ten years since she first received it.

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press

Lemonville resident Betty Zwicker has an orchid that would be the envy of the most accomplished horticulturalist.

"I'm in my 80s now and I got this orchid from a group of friends at the church when I had surgery for cancer of the jaw ten years ago," said Betty, who is now cancer-free. "Every year, on the anniversary of the surgery in November, it starts to bloom, and it goes on until about March before the last bloom comes off."

Today the plant has become a veritable tree, boasting an astonishing 70 blooms at its peak. "It has so many different branches, it keeps my husband busy staking it. It

doesn't seem to be like the little orchids in the store," she said, with gentle understatement.

"It's been a wonderful anniversary present every year and I ask myself, how can something so beautiful come out of something so awful?" When she first received her diagnosis, she was shocked, because jaw cancer is usually related to smoking, "and I've never had a cigarette in my life."

Her friends at Lemonville United Church often visit to see how her magnificent orchid is thriving and for Betty, it's more than a plant; it's a reminder of the joy of friendship and the support that kept her spirits up during a dark and difficult time of her life.

Renovations Complete At Care And Share

Fourteen months after the Care and Share Thrift Shop moved to its current location at 33 Ringwood Drive, the store is bustling with customers checking out everything from clothing and crockery to furniture and beautiful quilts, handcrafted by local artisans.

"We are now fully finished with renovations and have introduced a new vintage and collectibles section," said operations manager Deborah LoPatriello. "Our quilters are back on the floor to share the wonderful ministry of the quilts and will be there to answer any questions."

With a recent 3,000 square foot addition and a new back parking lot for donation drop-offs, Care and Share offers a veritable treasure trove of items to appeal to all ages and interests: Clothing, books, toys, home decor, accessories – almost anything you can imagine – and at bargain prices every day.

The store welcomes donations of gently-

used items, including furniture, which should be smoke-free and with no stains or rips. Not only are the prices excellent, but "there are hundreds of items at 50 per cent off as well as items selling for just a dollar," said Ms LoPatriello.

The Care and Share could not operate without its dedicated volunteers and donors, and the customers who come back year after year, she said. "We are a charity and our mission is globally and locally driven." The shop's tagline "Where every purchase is a gift to the world" encapsulates Care and Share's philosophy.

"We want to give special recognition to all of the incredible volunteers that have been with us for the history of the store and the new ones that have joined our team," stressed Ms LoPatriello. "Without them this (place) would not be possible."

Care and Share Thrift Shop will host a grand opening on Saturday, May 16.



Care and Share volunteers are the backbone of the newly-expanded store on Ringwood Drive. Seen here (left to right) are: volunteer cashier Janice Sandford; Whitney Bautista Martinez from Colombia, who is part of an international volunteer exchange program; Rick Wall, volunteer maintenance man; Adam Barnett, volunteer in the receiving department; relief manager Pat Strathdee and operations manager Deborah LoPatriello.

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