

## Draw Of The Decade



Reesor's Market & Bakery celebrated its 10th anniversary with an open house, held March 9 to 14. Dave Nelson and family (pictured) were among many who entered a draw for a gift basket. Daughter Rika drops an entry form into the box while sisters Gray (left) and Sira look on, along with Reesor's staff member Laura Deacon. Bruce Stapley photo

## A Welcome Surprise For A Special Resident

Mayor honours Dianne Darling

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Dianne Darling has felt nothing but positive in spite of the distressing diagnosis of stage 4 brain cancer she received in January. Her reaction is typical of the 75-year-old, who has been spreading good cheer in town for the past 38 years.

As part of the Welcome Wagon team, Dianne was always at the forefront of welcoming newcomers to the community, taking with her baskets of useful information and introductory tokens for families.

"She won the top hostess award eight times in her career, having put together baskets that exceeded everyone else's in value," said her daughter Nancy, who is in Stouffville on an eight-week compassionate care leave to spend time with her mother.

Little did Dianne know that her work and goodwill would inspire the town to rally around her at such a difficult time. As a special gesture, Mayor Justin Altmann planned a surprise dinner for her on March 11 at the Stakeout Dining Room & Lounge on Main Street. He arranged for Dianne and her husband to be picked up in a limousine that gave them a tour of the town before taking them to the restaurant.

"I believe it was my parents' first limo ride," said Nancy. "She was excited to be in the private room at the restaurant with the other girls from Welcome Wagon."

She was even more delighted and surprised when the mayor arrived to join her and her party for dinner.

"It was a real treat when I saw the mayor

walk in after we had settled down to what I thought was a dinner with my Welcome Wagon team. He is such a nice kid! I've met him a few times before and he has a lot going for him," said Dianne.

"He has a great sense of community and is very genuine. We had a great conversation at dinner about where he grew up, his farm, and what he wants to accomplish in his term as mayor."

For Nancy and her brother David, the fact that their mother is being honoured and recognized for her work is a source of comfort.

"My mum has always been very personable and professional," said Nancy. "As children, we remember her typing out her reports each month while my dad would put the kits together. It was such a labour intensive job, but my parents gave it all they had. Even today, though Stouffville has grown so big, we meet a lot of people who know her when we take her for walks downtown."

Mayor Altmann said his surprise was a way to thank Dianne for her years of dedication to the community.

"I heard about how much she had done for the town at the YOU177 function and wanted to do something special to highlight all her years of service. She is a prime example of grassroots, the way her team goes door to door and meets people. That's how our community was built and this was the perfect way to thank her for it," he said.

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Karen Bowman, Dianne Darling, Justin Altmann, Joan Skovhøj and Sheryl Clinton enjoy a special evening at the Stakeout in Stouffville. Kinjal Dagli Shah photo

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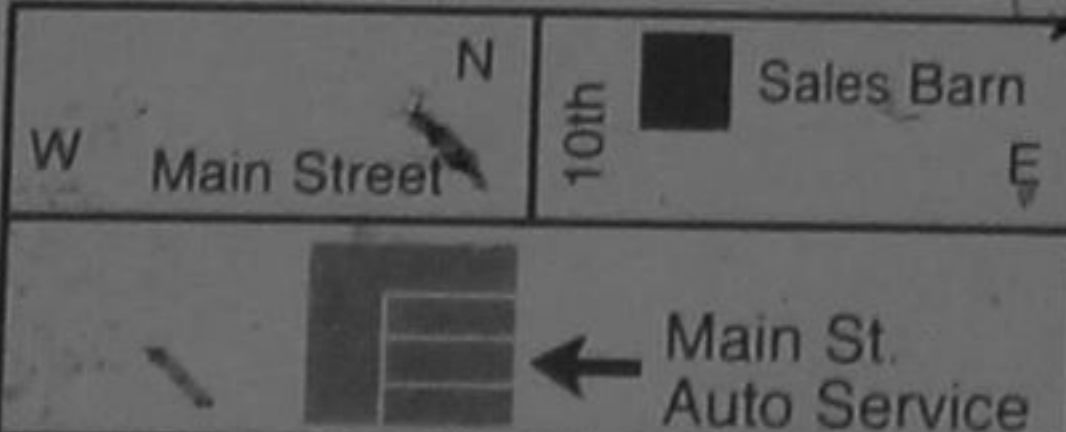
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