

Canadian jewellers share the holiday spirit

by Cheryl Stoneburgh

If you have seen the movie “Pay it Forward” then you will understand my admiration for Canada’s jewellery industry ... and why.

Five years ago I wanted to do something during the holiday season that would impact the community and in particular the issue of abused women in shelters. I found from volunteering with the Salvation Army for many years that children are easier to find support for and I felt that by creating a program that would give support and confidence to the mothers, it would in the long run also benefit the children.

My idea was to fill a laundry basket with items a woman would use leaving a shelter and starting over in a new place. Some of these women have fled their homes on very short notice, taking nothing with them. Items in the hampers can range from household items to personal items, including toothbrushes, Q-tips, cream, soap, nightshirt, tea towels, coffee maker, umbrella, wallet, candles, cosmetics, etc. I approached a few friends and associates inside and outside the jewellery industry for support and created the *Basketeers*.

nitta Hawkins, serve a celebratory function for women at a time when it’s not easy to be in a shelter. “They’re very beautifully presented,” she says, “and that boosts people’s self-esteem and sense of value.”

Many families and offices sponsor a basket as a family or work project, and the contents can be as unique and creative as the donors. Some donors theme the baskets for the kitchen or bathroom. Often they include poems, Christmas cards and homemade crafts. We have also been generously supported by manufacturers and importers in the jewellery industry, including Daco manufacturing, Rousseau, Gilo Creations and Evenchick Jewellery. There are no tax receipts issued – these gifts are given and created in the truest spirit of the season. It is because of the generosity of hundreds of ordinary and extraordinary people, friends and acquaintances that this project continues to grow.

For me, looking out on a sea of cellophane, ribbons and bows every year in late November is an inspiring sight. The baskets fill the hall of WoodGreen United



Cheryl Stoneburgh, centre, with fellow *Basketeers*, from left, Mira Panza, Agnes McKenna and Olive Bash.

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The first year, we were able to deliver 14 baskets to The Red Door Shelter. By our fourth year, 2003, we finished with 185 baskets, enabling us to deliver some to the Toronto Community Hostel as well. Thankfully, Rubbermaid became a sponsor in our second year and continues to support us every year by providing the baskets. Our target this year was 225 baskets. We created a grand total of 265! The hampers, according to Red Door executive director Bern-

Church, our Toronto drop-off location. Thank you to everyone in the industry who has spent the last five years helping me to make a difference: Carla Adams, Cathy McMurray, Faye Campbell, Laura Hall, Kristine Wilson, Doreen Bell, Joanne Sibeth, Lynn Pain, the staff of Daco Manufacturing, Habib Malo, Ingrid Thomson, Mary Villamagna, Mirella Silvestri, Virginia Slike, Phyllis Richard, Diana Brugos, Pat Dowling, Sylvia Tellalian, Keith and

Paula Perrin, the staff of Handy & Harman, Mayur and Bali Davé, Gayle Gordon, Susan Clarke, Beverly Serrao, Stewart Cawthorne, Chuck Bridle, Teresa Oziewicz and the staff of the Canadian Jewellers Association.

To join the *Basketeers*, contact me at (416) 695-1939 and please take the time to look at our Web site www.basketeers.ca for more information.



The *Basketeers* created 265 baskets this year for women at Toronto shelters.

Basketeers, the Web site provides a list of suggestions for inclusion.

Toronto's Red Door shelter, (actually three separate shelters) is the largest of about 20 such facilities in the city that help women and families in need of temporary housing, either because of poverty or abuse. In 2003, 670 families found temporary refuge at Red Door.

Cheryl Stoneburgh is vice-president of sales at Malo Creations, a Montreal jewellery manufacturer.

Editor's note: According to Cheryl, the average basket is created at a cost of \$150, but donors have spent up to \$800 in the past. Some of the *Basketeers* work in groups, meeting for a lunch on an appointed day, when they create their baskets together. For first-time

WINNIPEG RETAILER SERVES UP DINNER AND A MOVIE, ALL FOR GOOD CAUSES

Ben Moss Jewellers teamed with a Winnipeg restaurant, Applebees, in the fall to host "The Spirit of Sharing: A Thanksgiving Celebration" for 800. Brent and Louis Trepel, president and vice-president of Ben Moss, co-sponsored the dinner and were among the 90 volunteers who helped serve the Thanksgiving feast for clients of Winnipeg Harvest food bank. The dinner included 319 pounds of turkey, 370 pounds of mashed potatoes, 77 litres of gravy and 265 pounds of stuffing. Winnipeg's Red River College donated its kitchen facilities for the dinner.

"We believe that Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful for all our good fortunes and share them with others," says Louis Trepel.

Ben Moss is also involved with The Children's Charity in Winnipeg, sponsoring an annual Sharing With Kids event, including a movie screening and lunch for 250 economically disadvantaged youth. Ben Moss also provided gifts for the children's goodie bags.

The Edmonton team of Ben Moss was recently recognized for its support of charities with the Outstanding Small Business Philanthropy Award by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce. The award recognized the jeweller's dedication to volunteering and for the money it has raised for the Children's Ability Fund. 