

# East Gwillimbury Women's Show Raises \$100,000 for Southlake's Cancer Centre

October is Women's History Month and the Bulletin is celebrating East Gwillimbury Women. So we thought the perfect WHO GIVES story would be about the East Gwillimbury Women's Show. Tangles Hair Salon has been hosting the Women's Show since April 2008. The idea for the first show started when I saw a need in the community for opportunities, especially for women in business. The event would be a women-focused show that would allow local businesses to showcase their products and services to a local women-centric consumer base.



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At that time East Gwillimbury didn't have a home show and Southlake Hospital was just starting the construction of the "Stronach Cancer Centre". They were calling on the community for funding support. I had heard many stories from my clients about having to travel all the way to Toronto hospitals to get cancer treatment which took precious time away from spending with their families. So we decided that Southlake Hospital, in particular the cancer centre, would receive any funds generated.

The first East Gwillimbury Women's Show was created in 2008 with 30 vendors and about 300 guests attended.

Two things stand out about the first year.

First, it was the huge line-up of people waiting to enter at opening. Second, it was counting the money at the end and realizing that we had raised \$6,600 for Southlake. I was thrilled and excited to see what else I could do with the show.

Working with the foundation at Southlake we came up with a plan to utilize the space and start having activities at the show and more sponsors. The show was then an every-other-year event.

This year's show raised over \$22,000.

At this show we were excited to have Ben and Jessica Mulroneu host our sold out Fashion Show. We have always handed out gift bags to the first 300 guests... this is a great way for local businesses to put samples or coupons for women to try out their products or services.

The silent auction has really grown over the years. This year we had over 100 items that were donated from local businesses.

The show gives potential customers a chance to meet the proprietors face-to-face and sample their products and services. Some vendors have said the show is the most successful event they have ever attended.

For me it's always important to keep the show a win-

win for everyone involved: the guests have a great day of activities and sampling, the vendors get to interact and promote their brand with hundreds of guests.

But the most important part of all of this is that Southlake gets a large donation. The show has raised money that has gone towards building the cancer centre as well as equipment used every day in the cancer centre.

With all the shows and some mini fundraisers the salon has held, we have collectively given Southlake \$100,000!

I don't think I ever dreamed the event would grow to be this successful and be able to raise this much but little by little, with every show raising more, it really added up. This money has made a big impact for people suffering with cancer in our community. I could not have done this without the continued support from my family, the Town of East Gwillimbury, the many sponsors and vendors who continue to return year after year, and of course the volunteers.

One volunteer from Holland Landing donates her basement for storage and volunteers at the show. It takes 20 volunteers to stuff the bags and another 30 people are needed the day of the show.

The Hospital has always been very appreciative of the work and commitment it takes. In August at a cheque presentation, the foundation handed me a vase that said "100,000 Thank you's to The East Gwillimbury Women's Show".

All of this impacted me in a personal way in 2012 when my mom was diagnosed with cancer and received her treatment at Southlake. They placed a plaque over the chair that my own mother used to receive her Chemotherapy treatments that read, "Thank you to the East Gwillimbury Women's Show." It really is so special to me that I have been able to donate such a large amount and know that I am making a difference for people in our community who are suffering with cancer.

Next month our *Who Gives... East Gwillimbury* story will be all about the Holly Berries Artisan Christmas Show being held at the Holland Landing Community Centre November 2.

If you have a story about a business, citizen or community group that is doing something to give back we want to hear from you. Please send us an email to: [Who.gives.eg@gmail.com](mailto:Who.gives.eg@gmail.com).

*Sharon Bates is the owner of Tangles Hair Salon & Spa in Holland Landing.*