



Fairy Godmother Project

Spring 2007

Nathalie Ellison
Lydia Willems
Kara Deshaw
Lara Martens



Kara Deshaw, Meridian Wellness Spa, and
Lara Martens, Balance Natural Health Clinic
Zen Gardens for Hope's Garden

Our project was to create Zen Gardens for "Hopes Garden". Hopes Garden is a non-profit center for those suffering with eating disorders. Zen Gardens are an Asian tradition. They vary in size from as big as an acre, to as small as a box. They are meant to encourage relaxation, positive thinking and self-reflection. We wanted to build something for the young women to take home, and be reminded of the struggles of the people who count on Hopes Garden for support. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses.

We decided on our project after hearing Hopes Garden being mentioned at the Women's Conference last fall. Being young women, we have seen many of our friends and loved ones suffer with self image and self esteem issues. We wanted to take on a project that could be continued in the future by Hopes Garden, and ourselves.

We took our assembled boxes to the annual Eating Disorder Awareness Week breakfast, in addition to some other events hosted by Hopes Garden.

We set out in search of donations for material to build the boxes from scratch. We had great luck at Michael's Craft Store, who gave us the majority of the supplies we needed at cost. We chose to purchase the boxes from Dollorama. Lara's little brother Lucas painted every box black, and spent many a cold night in their barn on this project. We planned a Pizza and Wine party at Lara's home and convinced our girlfriends to come over and help us assemble the Zen Gardens. After a few hours of work, we had assembled 80 boxes. We would like to thank Lucas, Sara Pauli, Suzan Vilaranda, Heather Killins and Diane Coward.

We both were passionate about this project for many reasons. Both of us work in a field where we help people feel healthier and more beautiful every day. I am an aesthetician and Lara is a registered massage therapist. We want to be able to inspire people to believe in their natural beauty. We believe we were able to make a difference to people with eating disorders by providing them with the beautiful Zen Gardens as a "visual" reminder of their success at Hopes Garden.

If you would like to make a donation to



Hopes Garden, please visit their website at www.hopesgarden.org; or, you can see us after the conference to purchase one of the Zen Gardens.

Susan Plester, Design Matrix Inc.
Fairy Godmother Stained Glass Angels

When I came to my very first meeting in October, I was blown away by the enthusiasm of this organization, that is, the Women's Conference.

My project is the creation of Fairy Godmother stained glass angels. Proceeds from the sale of these angels will be returned to the Fairy Godmother initiative. The glass angels were sold at many locations, and also at the Women's Conference—the spring of 2007.

Nathalie Ellison, aka, Nifty Nat
Pilates for Women in Safe Houses

I was newly trained in this wonderful form of exercise, and was eager to share my skills to help people strengthen themselves from within. It was my privilege to source specialized pilates mats, from the Stott Pilates Centre in Toronto, and take them from one location to another, leading women in the various shelters, through one hour pilates sessions.

The exercise has proven to be popular as a stress releaser. I found that the women appreciated the classes, which I continued to teach for many months.



Peggy Brenneman,
Siskinds, LLP
Deanne Medeiros,
Westview Funeral Chapel
Together, We Fly as Sisters!

With the suggestion of Cathy Urquhart, Executive Director of Big Sisters of London, we requested all of our e-mail contacts to donate their Aeroplan Miles to Big Sisters of London.

We had thought about in the past but did not have an opportunity to get off the ground. Our strategy is to be present at several community events and make our request in person.

Results are that points have been donated to total \$3,000 for Big Sisters of London. There are some remaining points that will be used, and will bring the total a little higher than \$3,000!

Sharon Whiteside, Goodlife Fitness Clubs
Partners for Life Program
Partnership with Canadian Blood Services

The Canadian Blood Services have a program called Partners for Life. They approach business in London and ask them to support the blood donor program and encourage their staff to give blood at local clinics, or perhaps host their own clinic. We wanted to support their valuable work in our community.

We sent invitations, planned the meeting, had a continental breakfast and goodie bags. Our goal was to sign up 5 new businesses, and invite their HR or Wellness people to an information breakfast where the programs were explained by the CBS recruiters.

The public will benefit from this program, and companies who support this initiative will be leaders in the community. CBS encourages business representatives to allow staff to attend clinics without loss of pay. The company commits to an annual number of donations, encouraging staff to give the gift of life!

We also had a guest speaker who lost a great deal of blood in an industrial accident and only through the life saving donations was he able to keep his legs.

Lydia Wilems,
Positive Results
Counseling
Strathroy Abuse Center –
Teddy Bear project



There were 2 things that I did with the Fairy Godmother project. I wanted to help children and, at the conference last fall, I was sitting beside Susan Ryan (Executive Director, Child Reach). I went to Child Reach to meet with Susan. This is a drop-in center committed to the healthy development of young children by providing learning opportunities, information and support. They ensure that parents and young children can “learn, play and grow together” for years to come.

I chose to help them with an upcoming event they were planning – “The Child Reach Family Fun Brunch”. The focus was to raise money for the John Mckim Child Reach Endowment fund.

I focused on the silent auction and brought in approximately \$1500.00 worth of products and services for the event. My kids volunteered with the set up for the event, and assisted in other activities during the event. This was their first volunteer experience!

The event raised \$15,000.00 and will become a yearly event. Our family will remain committed as volunteers for the event. My intent was to put the money from the Fairy Godmother fund into the Child Reach event but it did not happen. I decided to use the money instead in a more personal and direct way.

I decided to buy teddy bears and give them to the Strathroy Abuse Center. My children and I had a garage sale so we could raise some extra money. The result of all of this: we purchased 40 teddy bears to give to the center and my children learned the valuable lesson of volunteerism.

My children and I spent a few weeks finding the perfect teddy bears. We held each bear, gave it lots of love in the hopes that each child receiving a teddy bear will feel that love.

It was a great feeling to know that a child who is suffering, feeling so unsure and unsafe can find a new friend who will give them unconditional love and a sense of peace. I am also very proud of my children!