

# Harold's Party Rentals brightens Horizons for Youth

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Harold's Party Rentals owner Adam Richie needed to clear out old inventory. Horizons for Youth needed help putting matching dishes, glasses and cutlery in front of at-risk youth living in their shelter. The timing fit like a glove. "We have always been running around trying to get enough dishes. Often I go to Costco to buy plastic ones that are costly to us," said Flomena Williams, executive director of Horizons for Youth, a 24/7 shelter for homeless and at-risk youth.

Horizons for Youth contacted Richie at his Caledonia Road warehouse, asking if he had any donations for the shelter.

Fortunately, Richie had set aside "several full skids worth of stuff" and was happy to pass this along to the shelter.

"If it's taking up space in my warehouse and I'm going to throw it out, I'd certainly rather see it go to a worthy cause," Richie said.

Williams said the donation is saving her organization at least a couple of thousand dollars she would have spent buying dishes, cups and cutlery.

"In the summer donations pick

up when we get leftovers from garage sales, but there's always a mish-mash," Williams said. "This donation looks nice on Sundays when we do brunch and set out tablecloths and matching dishes, so it gives (the kids) a sense of home."

Furthermore, Williams said with the money she is saving on flatware she can afford to boost the food budget.

"I'm always in need of money for the food budget. The donations are highly appreciated but...fresh produce doesn't last very long," Williams said. "Whatever savings we get will go towards food, especially breakfast."

Williams receives a majority of the shelter's food from the Second Harvest Food Bank. She said not a lot of breakfast food comes in so she has to constantly purchase eggs, pancake mix and a variety of other breakfast foods because many of the kids go to school and they need a proper breakfast to start the day.

Williams said she hopes generous donations like the one from Harold's Party Rentals continue, and the first step is getting the word out that the shelter can use the community's help.

"People are generous and people care, they just need to know we're here," Williams said.

# Camp caters to teens aiming to take the business world by storm

## Biz Camp sponsored by Alterna Savings

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Youth interested in learning about the business world are taking part in a six-week Biz Camp program run by the Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF).

The business and self-employment support program is offered to youth between ages 15 and 18 in the Weston Road and Mount Dennis Drive area of Toronto.

The nine participants involved in this session of Biz Camp are able to win \$500, \$750 and \$1,000, sponsored by Alterna Savings, for the best business plan in an end of class competition in March.

"We've been delivering this program for a few years now," said Jean-Marie Boutot of LEF. "We run it twice a year. In the summer we do a three-week-long program and in the winter six weeks."

Coaches and business mentors help advise the group on pitches, public speaking and developing business plans, Boutot said.

"All the participants are gung ho in creating their own business plan," she said. "If one day they want to get into business, this program helps them explore options."

Workshops run out of LEF's youth centre at Weston Road and



TBT photo/GREG VACCHER

Guest speaker David Cohen, left, and Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF) 'Biz Camp' participants Rahul Duggal and Shlok Naik join a discussion of marketing strategies and their future business plans last month at the LEF offices.

Eglinton Avenue include business planning, marketing, access to financial resources, career exploration and life and work management.

"At the end of the six weeks, they put together pages for a business plan and a 30-second pitch to a panel of judges," Boutot said, adding top prize is \$1,000. "And they all receive a \$100 honorarium upon graduation."

The goal of Biz Camp, Boutot said, is building confidence and transferable skills.

"They all have strengths and weaknesses and they are learning how that translates into the business world," she said. "They are learning that making a great first impression is important."

Dhesaka Jayasuriya became

interested in Biz Camp after representatives from LEF spoke to his business class about the program.

"I want to be a human resources manager and maybe have a graphic design business on the side," said the 17-year-old Weston Collegiate Institute student. "I use what I learn in business class towards the (Biz Camp) program. It's a really productive program and having a background in business will look good on a resume."

Biz Camp is open to grades 10, 11 and 12 students currently enrolled in post-secondary education or of high school age but not presently in school.

For information, email jmboutot@lefa.org

# BNI Success Network boosts harvest at local food bank

The BNI Success Network played host to the second annual Midwinter Kitchen Concert in aid of the North York Harvest Food Bank, generating more than 10,000 pounds of food.

The Feb. 5 concert featured musical acts Two Roads Home and Ceol Cara.

With the help of Disley Food Services, Spring Air Somme Corp., makers of Obusforme mattresses, the Delta Toronto East Hotel, as well as other sponsors and individuals that attended the event, the original goal of 5,000 pounds was doubled.

Organizers report that even in a snowstorm on the day of the concert, people came out and brought not just cans of food but grocery bags full of donations.

The Midwinter Kitchen Concert is the brainchild of Abby Zotz of Two Roads Home. She brought the idea to Andy Hall and Chris Marcucci, respectively the president and treasurer of the BNI Success Network, in 2009, who then pitched the idea to the group.

The BNI Success Network offered a unique opportunity. Because BNI chapters are made



Photo/RON ELMY

Volunteers with some of the food donated through the benefit concert: back row, left to right: Dee Paul, Heather Freed, Robert Barnes, Chris Marcucci, Jonathan Hall, Andy Hall, Stephanie Hall, Craig Gibbs; front row, left to right: Shalina Manek, Taiju Hashimoto, Ian DiNovo, James Boylan, Kevin Byworth, Lisa Hall, John Chung, Gail Lenters.

up of individual businesses across multiple fields, the resources and diverse expertise available made this a great fit.

This was the second year that The Success Network has been the lead sponsor on the

Midwinter Kitchen Concert and the second year that the goal for food donations has been more than doubled.

For more information visit [www.midwinterkitchenconcert.com](http://www.midwinterkitchenconcert.com)

# Toshiba gives students an online advantage

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Toshiba of Canada Limited is donating 10 Satellite laptops to the University of Toronto Scarborough, in support of students demonstrating financial need.

"The economic burden on students has moved beyond tuition as laptops and other technology become increasingly critical to the 21st century educational experience," Sherry Lyons, director of communications at Toshiba, said in a release.

With the Internet expanding the limits of university classrooms, the need for easy access to online materials has greatly increased as

more professors use online content to support their class material.

Pagalavan Thavarajah, vice-president external at the Scarborough Campus Student's Union, said there are more than 30 programs based solely on online material serving anywhere from 500 to 5,000 students.

"Students with access to a laptop have a definite advantage with respect to easy access to certain online classes along with all the other online information available such as time-tables and work assignments," said Sandra Prospero, director of marketing and communications at the Scarborough campus in a release.

# Pub collects change for change

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Since opening The Avro on Queen Street East in September, 26-year-old part-owner Rachel Conduit has spear-headed community initiatives around the Riverside district.

"This neighbourhood is really fantastic," Conduit said. "I really wanted people in the community who otherwise wouldn't meet to be able to connect."

How does she bring the community together? Through the Community Project's jar sitting on the bar at The Avro; Where most bars sport a tip jar, Conduit uses the money to fund community events.

Her latest project was a sledding social at Riverdale Hill. Conduit purchases a dozen sleds from Canadian

Tire and made them available to anyone who came out on Jan. 31. She also offered piping hot chocolate for those looking to circumvent the cold.

"We then donated the 12 sleds to the Red Door Shelter," a women and children's shelter on Queen Street East, she said.

Conduit said the inspiration for this community jar came last summer. While The Avro was being renovated, Conduit said she gathered donations from around the city and put some green back into her neighbourhood.

"The city had chopped down some trees along the sidewalk and left stumps in Riverside District. I went out and planted gardens where all the tree stumps were and I got a lot of positive feedback," she said.

# Send us your Good Works stories

Our Good Works column would like to hear about good deeds done by businesses in Toronto.

Is your company organizing a charity event? Or planning a fundraiser for a great cause? Perhaps a

corporate donation is being made.

Big or small, we want to hear about them all.

Send us your submission by e-mail to [tbt@insidetoronto.com](mailto:tbt@insidetoronto.com).