

Garden centre gets behind inner-city kids

Shelmerdine raises \$6,595 for the Boys and Girls Club

By: Prescott James



Nicole Bent (left) and Nancy Chippendale are impressed by the amount of support Shelmerdine's Wish Tree fundraiser got from the garden centre's customers.

Staff at Shelmerdine Garden Centre in Headingley recently planted a seed that they hope will bear fruit for inner-city kids in Winnipeg for years to come.

The company's Giving Tree program was launched in early December. It raised more than \$6,500 for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg through the sale of Christmas ornaments and photos with Santa Claus.

The Giving Tree was the brainchild of Shelmerdine's public relations and community events coordinator Nancy Chippendale. She said that the initiative was a good way for the centre's customers to give back this Christmas.

"This is a brand new idea for Shelmerdine's," she said. "The idea of partnering... Shelmerdine's with the inner city is somewhat transformational for the company and its customers."

Chippendale said the ornaments were an ideal way to raise money for charity because there was little overhead and the proceeds went directly to the charity.

"Often when you run a fundraising event, the overhead costs will cancel out the proceeds that can be donated," she said.

Shelmerdine vice-president Nicole Bent said it was important for her company to support at-risk youth in Winnipeg.

"We wanted to (connect) inner-city youth with our garden centre customers," Bent said.

"We choose the Boys and Girls Clubs because of their youth for eco-action program, which is developing community gardens that inner-city youth participate in. We wanted to help them with this program."

Heather Black, director of volunteers, services and events for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg, said the support from Shelmerdine's was much appreciated — and much needed. The organization offers programming to more than 4,000 children across the city.

"Through the generosity of the Shelmerdine Garden Centre, the Boys and Girls Clubs can continue to offer safe after school programming for children and youth," Black said. "This money will go towards our youth for eco-action and community garden development."

Chippendale said she was surprised by how successful the Giving Tree program was in its first year.

It was the second fundraiser undertaken by Shelmerdine's on behalf of the Boys and Girls Clubs. The first was a hay maze it conducted this past October that raised more than \$9,600 for the organization.

Black said the company plans to continue its relationship with the charity in the coming year.

"We intend to continue our support for them in 2011 and we are already brainstorming some new projects," she said. "We are thinking that in spring we will get our staff involved in their community garden development."

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