

# YOU make a difference

*Dedicated to Fostering a Healthy and Safe Community*

## Employability Skills Training Provides Youth Vital Links to Future Opportunities

In 2006, in consultation with community stakeholders, the DFCC developed a pilot project to offer an Employability Skills Training Program to youth attending the agency's Collaborative Day Treatment Program. The program provides vulnerable youth the opportunity to develop work related skills and practical training opportunities in an environment that supports their unique academic, emotional and behavioural challenges. By creating this innovative and client-focused program, youth can access opportunities previously not available to them and enhance their opportunities to secure future employment and economic stability. Program activities include Food Handling, WHMIS and First Aid certificate training, job shadowing



and co-op placements. Students are also assisted in developing job readiness skills including resumé development, interview techniques, communications and interpersonal /relationship skills.

Primary funding for the program comes from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services - Youth Justice Services, with additional funds provided by *Seeds of Hope*, the DFCC's charitable campaign. Approximately fifty youth, 14-19 years of age have participated in the pilot project running from September 2006 to June 2007.

Four older youth, with high levels of learning readiness, participated in individual co-op placements, working as assistants. To support the successful completion of the placement and a high school credit, students were matched with businesses whose services complemented the youth's personal interests and aptitudes. Based on these interests, a co-op partnership was established with a mechanic shop, hair and beauty supply store, pet care facility and a recording studio.

Feedback from DFCC staff, youth participants and community partners has been very positive. One male student, 18 years of age, earned a grade eleven credit, achieving an overall mark of 76% during his full-time placement at a recording studio. Feedback given to the student acknowledged his motivation, punctuality, reliability, courteous manner and ability to meet and exceed placement expectations. The student was able to take leadership roles in "mixing recordings" and customer relations. The co-op experience was so

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## DFCC receives Ministry of the Attorney General grant to assist youth victims

In December 2006, the Ministry of the Attorney General, through the Community Grants Program and the Victims' Justice Fund, announced that the DFCC was a recipient of a \$140,150 project grant. Our 15-month funded project extends over two fiscal years and creates an innovative community-based program designed to assist youth, primarily twelve to eighteen years of age, who are victims, or who are at risk of being victims, of sexual exploitation. Funds support the creation and delivery of an integrated series of psycho-educational workshops. Special outreach will be made to Durham Region's northern communities and organizations providing frontline support to youth-at-risk, including street youth. Program development incorporates the use of a survey to help assess the needs of youth who will benefit from the program and the needs of community service providers who make contact with and support these youth.

Workshops address victim issues that manifest as a result of neglect, physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse. Workshop topics include substance abuse, addiction, self harm, low self esteem and mental health illness. The project focuses on developing a foundation for change within a therapeutic setting to assist youth in becoming more informed and better able to make positive choices to help reduce their risk of victimization. Connecting youth to appropriate community

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# You make a difference

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*The Promise of  
a Brighter Future  
for our Kids*

Durham Family Court Clinic gratefully acknowledges our funding partners, special granting bodies, donors and community for their generous and continuous support in promoting the well-being of the children, youth and families of Durham Region.

DFCC funding partners include:

Ministry of Children & Youth Services

Ministry of the Attorney General

Durham District School Board

Durham Children's Aid Society

## Board of Directors

DFCC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and seeks proactive planners and creative thinkers who are over the age of eighteen, who live and/or work in Durham Region and seek to be a part of a growing and dynamic team.

For additional information regarding upcoming volunteer board positions, please visit [www.dfcc.org](http://www.dfcc.org) or call 905.436.6754.

## Message from the Executive Director



Bonnie Gagné  
Executive Director

As in previous years, recent times at the DFCC have presented many challenging moments and successes. As in any organization during a period of growth, new opportunities arise and processes are changed. This can create a level of uneasiness as well as excitement within an organization.

This addition of our You newsletter highlights many of these exciting moments including the introduction of new programming in the Collaborative Day Treatment Program emphasizing the development of youth employability and job readiness skills. This focus supports our vision of providing services to youth to help ensure their future success. In late 2006, DFCC received a grant from the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of the Attorney General to develop and deliver a series of psycho-educational workshops for youth who are, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited. Initiatives such as these support the agency's vision of providing services that better prepare youth for the future.

Our partnerships with a number of community services are critical resources for DFCC. The Stakeholders for the various programs provide exceptional support and their input and ideas contribute greatly to strengthening DFCC programs and their delivery.

In order to provide effective services, program design and delivery are essential elements as is staff's commitment to their clients. The skills and professionalism demonstrated by staff and their ability to establish effective therapeutic relationships drive the success of our programs and our clients' experiences when receiving service.

In regards to growth and energy, the dedicated support of our volunteer Board of Directors and the addition of new staff have further added to the DFCC's strong foundation - a foundation made of people who contribute, in many different ways, to the success in providing effective services to our clients. Without each member of this team, DFCC would not have the solid foundation and reputation that it has.

Sincerely,  
Bonnie Gagné, MSW, RSW, Acc.FM (OAFM)  
Executive Director

## Message from the Board Chair

What an amazing journey it has been at the DFCC since our last newsletter. The introduction of new services and the expansion of existing ones have required an exceptional level of dedication by everyone working and volunteering at the DFCC to keep pace. In response to the tremendous growth in clinical services, we have introduced the position of Clinical Director, have welcomed new staff, and have reorganized program models. As a community member who lives and works in Durham Region and is professionally invested in the care and treatment of at-risk children, youth and families, I am very pleased to be contributing to an organization that is so deeply committed to its mission and to addressing community needs and service gaps. The advocacy component to our work, especially within the context of the growing complexity of community pressures and needs is very challenging, but is truly rewarding.



Yours truly,  
Dr. Carla Baetz  
Board Chair



## Assessment Section 34 Assessments

Section 34 Assessments are Court ordered, and provide information to the Court regarding a youth in conflict with the law and provide recommendations that support the judiciary system in planning for a youth's rehabilitation and re-integration into their community.

Assessments are conducted by a team of professionals, specifically an assessor, psychologist and psychiatrist. The assessments are broad ranging and include information regarding the young person's family history, psychological makeup, social/community involvement, peer relationships, academic history and other

factors which may contribute to his/her being in conflict with the law.

Typically, the assessment team is given four to six weeks time to report back in Court once an assessment has been ordered. In that time frame, all three team members must interview the youth to gather information. The assessor gathers all collateral information and interviews the parents or the Children's Aid Society, if the youth is in care. The assessor may also interview the youth's probation officer, school principal and other agencies that may be, or may have been, involved with the youth. Work done by the psychologist

and psychiatrist provide important information to prepare a comprehensive understanding of the youth.

Providing assessments can be challenging because of the complexity in coordinating and gathering of the required information, the existence of barriers to accessing the required information and the challenges associated with preparing recommendations that will best fit the needs of youth, while presenting information in a written manner that will best meet the needs of the Court.

## Counselling Addressing the Needs of At-Risk Youth

### **Community Support Team ~ A Multi-Systemic Approach to Assisting At-Risk Youth**

Referrals to the Community Support Team (CST) are received from Probation Officers seeking to obtain long-term, multi-systemic therapeutic counselling on behalf of youth in conflict with the law. Seeking to overcome all barriers to service, counsellors provide a myriad of therapeutic supports, meeting the youth at their point of need, including in their homes, in the community or at the DFCC. Our agency is very fortunate in that many

CST program members are veterans in their field and have been with the DFCC for up to eighteen years. Such experience enables opportunities for advanced training in many areas and, as a result, the DFCC is able to provide a wide variety of treatment modalities including Family Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Solution Focused Therapy, specialized therapy for youth who have sexually offended, Art Therapy, Psychodrama and Group Therapy. The CST has been serving Durham Region since 1988.

### **Demand for the Violence Prevention Program (VPP) Continues to Grow**

Highlighted in our last newsletter as a new service, VPP is designed to change school culture regarding violence and bullying through the delivery of workshops and assemblies. Using a psycho-educational format, facilitators provide violence alternative messages and solutions to students and teachers at schools and youth in other community settings. Due to continued demand additional staff now support this program. During the 2006-

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## Mediation A Service that helps Families Deal with Conflict

Michael Saini, Ph. D. (candidate) MSW, RSW, is an independent consultant, who has been contracted to undertake outcomes research for the DFCC's Family Mediation and Information Service. Research findings will be used to create a better understanding of the current mediation service and provide information to help improve service delivery.

During the research stage, parents using our off-site mediation service will have the option to voluntarily participate and answer additional questions on in-take forms (pre-service stage) and exit forms (post-service stage). Questions are designed to gather information to help evaluate parents' experiences before and after being involved in mediation and will focus on

issues related to communication and conflict between parents and their feelings about parenting.

The Family Mediation and Information Service is a service for separating and divorcing clients offering free Onsite (at Court) and affordable Offsite family mediation, a resource and referral service (at Court) and free parent information sessions.

Mediation services are provided by experienced and accredited Mediators who assist individuals reach agreements, while promoting communication and co-operation. The service offers an option that is less costly than attending court to resolve issues and the process benefits children and

other family members by reducing conflict during a difficult period in people's lives.

The Family Law and Information Centre is a walk-in information service located at 33 King Street West in Oshawa and is jointly supported by the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Aid Ontario at the Superior Court of Justice in Oshawa. While visiting, individuals have an opportunity to seek legal and non-legal information in areas of family law.

The DFCC's Family Mediation and Information Service is funded, through a service contract, with the Ministry of the Attorney General. To learn more about Family Mediation please visit our website at [www.durhamfamilymediation.ca](http://www.durhamfamilymediation.ca)

## **Counselling... from page 3**

2007 school year interactive workshops were delivered to almost 6,000 students in the Durham Region. Workshop topics include Anger Management, Bullying, Conflict Resolution, Dating Violence, Gang Violence, Internet Luring, Homophobia and Racism.

### ***Intensive Support and Supervision Program (ISSP) Receives Additional Funding to Serve Youth Diagnosed With Complex Mental Health Needs***

The ISSP began serving Durham Region in 2006. With a successful review of the project's first year, the Ministry of Children & Youth Services announced that the program would receive additional funding to increase the number of youth served.

With this new mandate came the need for increased staff support to provide this very specialized service.

The ISSP addresses complex mental health needs of youth in conflict with the law during the period of disposition ordered by the Court. Community based, individualized programs are designed to deliver services that are appropriate to the youth's level of functioning and target the specific issues and needs contributing to offending behaviours. A major premise of the ISSP is to provide appropriate alternatives to custody and reduce its use when the mental health and/or special needs of the youth are determined to be a contributing factor to the youth's being in conflict with the law.

## **Employability Skills... from page 1**

successful that this youth also participated in a second placement with a landscaping business.

For youth who required a greater level of support, staff established two creative co-op opportunities. Under the supervision of both a Teacher and Child & Youth Worker, a group of students attended a weekly co-op placement at a local coffee shop and worked as assistant maintenance workers. The presence and support of DFCC staff enabled youth to problem solve contentious issues as they acquired job skills. A number of younger students (14-16 years of age) visited, on a weekly basis under DFCC staff supervision, a local retirement home to provide 'craft' sessions. Youth participants commented on this being a very positive experience, with feedback including, "It's fun to see the older people", "It's nice to see them (the residents) happy to see us" and "I like to help them out". The retirement home's Recreation Director told DFCC staff that the residents look forward to the craft sessions and enjoy interacting with the youth. A support staff described the sessions as a rewarding experience for everyone and commented that although it was a lot of work to get it started, it has been very rewarding to see relationships developing between the residents and the youth.

Students requiring an environment with less job associated pressures were given the chance to participate in a co-op placement both within the DFCC's Nutrition Program and at Upstairs @ Loblaws, Bowmanville Market. Students were provided a structured and therapeutically supported environment to practice technical (food handling) skills and the interpersonal skills required for future community placements.

The co-ordinator at Loblaws actively participated in the program and commented that: "I have really enjoyed working with the youth in the DFCC program and feel that the experience has been very positive for all parties involved. The youth have learned how to make several healthy dishes in a safe and efficient manner, and have gained confidence in witnessing the success of their culinary creations. I look forward to working with the DFCC in future projects."

4 To learn more about how you can support the DFCC's Employability Skills Training Program through donations and partnership opportunities, please call Resource Development at 905.436.6754, ext. 233.

## **Expanded Office Space Secured due to Growing Client Base and New Programming**

The success of current services and the introduction of a new program at the beginning of 2007, presented many unique challenges and demands for staff. With so much growth in recent years, the need for increased office space became an ever pressing issue as we worked to maintain service quality, efficiency and productivity. To help address this challenge, the DFCC began an exciting journey in early 2007, by acquiring an additional 2,500 square feet of neighbouring office space and renovating the existing premises. With the expansion work completed in April 2007, we can now provide appropriate work space for staff and address the issue of anticipated growth in services. We now also have a much needed resource office, can accommodate agency meetings, properly house the growing Mediation program and provide a place where all clients and staff feel comfortable and at ease.

During the transition stage of the expansion, the Admin Team played a pivotal role by supporting services, staff and clients. This, combined with the ever increasing and changing needs of the agency, has at times been very challenging for the Team, but they are credited for demonstrating professionalism and commitment every step of the way.

### ***DFCC receives... from page 1***

resources and developing networks of support to promote ongoing positive change is also a goal of the program.

Working in collaboration, this project is establishing and/or strengthening our community partnerships with various agencies, including Durham Region Police Service, the Durham Public Health Department, the Victim Witness Assistance Program, Pinewood Centre, Lakeridge Health, Durham Children's Aid Society and local grass root organizations such as the Butterfly Organization.



TRANSITION GROWTH

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DEVELOPMENT CHANGE RENEWAL

Durham Family Court Clinic



YOU make the difference



The Promise  
of a Brighter  
Future for  
Our Kids

# Seeds of Hope

## Thank you to our Supporters

Funds raised through *Seeds of Hope* assist vulnerable children and youth establish the necessary building blocks to improve their life opportunities. *Seeds of Hope* supports various charitable activities including our *Connecting Kids to Counselling* and *Connecting Kids to Their Community* initiatives.

## Sponsor & Donor News

### Christmas Gift & Food Drive Helps Over 30 Youth Clients and 50 Family Members



DFCC staff join together to say thank you to our Christmas Food & Gift Drive Donors

Our Christmas Gift and Food Drive makes outreach to youth clients, who are in special need of assistance over the holiday season. A combination of financial and in-kind donations of food and gifts are received from individual DFCC staff and agency associates, and from various community organizations.

Our 2006 drive was a tremendous success as it not only helped to meet the immediate needs of those assisted, but also offered the important gift of helping youth believe that there is hope.

Feedback from those involved revealed several common themes, including how the gifts given alleviated a burden or stress,



*Every day our clients demonstrate the strength and courage to overcome adversity and, because of this, it has been an honour for us to serve the children, youth and families of our community for more than 25 years.*

created opportunities for counsellors to connect in new ways with their young clients, and how there was a genuine sense of openness to receive and express gratitude.

On behalf of our agency, our young clients and their families, the DFCC gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the following organizations who granted us the privilege of being recipients of their drives. We also thank everyone who made donations and volunteered to these community projects: Dunbarton-Fairport United Church, Durham Regional Police Services - Food & Toy Drive, Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce (Christmas Wine & Cheese Food Drive), St. George's Anglican Church and Trinity United Church (Bowmanville).

### Back-to-School - Helping Kids Succeed

For DFCC youth clients going back to school in the Fall can be filled with anxiety and apprehension. Their school experiences have often included multiple challenges and for most of our youth the lack of financial resources compounds their situation, making it problematic for them to come to school with basic learning provisions.

Providing students with school supplies can make a real difference. In the Fall of 2006, Dunbarton-Fairport United Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and United Way of Oshawa-Whitby-Clarington-Brock & Scugog made generous donations to assist students in our Collaborative Day Treatment Program, youth clients involved in various agency treatment programs as well as some of our clients' siblings. Items donated were broad ranging and included backpacks, calculators, binders, paper, pens, rulers and art supplies.

Also provided during the Fall and Winter of 2006, from Dunbarton-Fairport United Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints were donations of personal grooming products for youth clients and their siblings. Donated items help meet the regular on-going needs of our young clients, provided extra additions to our Christmas Gift Baskets and are given to youth who attend our camp programs. For related details, please read Winter Camp Focus (p.6) and Christmas Food & Gift Drive (p.5).



## Camps & Sports Programming Help Build Healthy Minds & Bodies

For the third year, the S'port for Kids Foundation has financially sponsored the DFCC's Therapeutic Camp Program, as well as various sports and leisure excursions for youth served by the CDTP, CST and ISSP. Thanks to the Foundation's generous support, youth participate in supervised excursions including swimming, bowling and visits to fitness clubs. Over the years, when at camp, they have also enjoyed additional activities such as horseback riding, canoeing, rope-climbing and skiing. These initiatives are intended to provide youth challenging opportunities designed to foster personal development, interpersonal skills, improve physical and mental health and promote integration into the community from which youth may have become disconnected.

### Winter Camp Focus

On January 31, 2007 the CST and ISSP embarked on a joint endeavour, taking 7 female youth to the Kinark Outdoor Centre for an overnight, three-day adventure where youth challenged themselves both physically and emotionally, stretching outside their comfort zones with the support of their counsellors. Prior to camp, most participants attended a pre-event session to review camp expectations and identify their individual strengths and areas of growth. From this initial meeting, the female youth acknowledged that each perceived other females in a mistrusting negative fashion and they designated the camp experience as an opportunity to redefine their perceptions of one another as female youth. Leaving their regular "coping strategies" behind, these adolescent females faced a combination of intense weather conditions and physical challenges, while sharing living space and working in collaboration to address therapeutic issues and explore strategies to overcome concrete obstacles, personal fears and insecurities. When issues of conflict or self doubt arose, each youth had the opportunity to access a therapist for assistance to gain insight, strength and personal resolution towards the challenge. During post-camp discussions, each youth expressed her appreciation for the

opportunity to attend camp and reported overcoming personal challenges, acknowledging moments of "greatness" and accomplishing something they previously viewed as impossible.

From the perspective of a seasoned CST therapist, the camp program offers valuable experiences to support positive development. "For youth that attend camp, the experience is forever with them and can be integrated as part of a new positive history. It offers them an opportunity to be encouraged, praised and appreciated. It opens their minds and their hearts to the possibility that they can achieve, that the impossible is possible, that they are worth the effort".

Current S'port for Kids' funding will also support our 2007 Summer Camp excursion.

### Nutrition Program

It's been wonderful over the years to update our readers on the progress made within the DFCC's Nutrition Program. This initiative provides students attending our therapeutic and educational based Collaborative Day Treatment Program many benefits.

Over the 2006-2007 school year a combination of more than 8,000 breakfasts, snacks and lunches will be served to students, an impressive increase over last year's reported numbers. Often students help to prepare the well balanced and delicious meals and snacks, offering them lots of opportunities to learn about healthy eating habits and providing them great hands-on cooking experience. The program also offers some youth the opportunity to earn a high school credit and most recently has been able to support the delivery of the Employability Skills Training Program (see cover story for related details).

Funding for the Nutrition Program relies heavily on grants and donations. Over the last school year, the DFCC received financial support from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Peterborough Family Resource Centre), Durham Child's Nutrition Program, the Baagwating Community Association, Breakfast for Learning - the Canadian Living Foundation and in-kind donations from New Life Neighbourhood Centre. The program also received financial support from Beate Ritchie and the guests of her Christmas charity luncheon.



*Often, the challenges that our youth face are immense and can seem insurmountable. However with support, and over time, the changes within these young people can be amazing and inspiring as they begin to understand, envision and live a life that is better than what they knew.*



Jennifer Matesic, DFCC Child and Youth Worker, prepares a lunchtime meal with students and staff.

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Donate on-line by visiting Durham Family Court Clinic at

[www.dfcc.org](http://www.dfcc.org)

and Help Plant the Seeds of Hope

## **Durham Transit - Connecting Kids to their Communities**

In 2006, the Council of the Regional Municipality of Durham endorsed a resolution for the Durham Region Transit Commission to support the DFCC's *Connecting Kids to Their Community* initiative. The resolution approved a donation of transit tickets to help youth clients, with limited economic means, gain access to counselling and other community based activities. Support from the Region demonstrates one of the many creative ways that our community can help break down barriers that limit at-risk youth's inclusion and positive participation in our community.

## **Donors Invest in Employability Skills Training for Youth**

The DFCC's Employability Skills Training Program offers agency youth the opportunity to develop work related skills and practical training opportunities in an environment that supports their unique academic, emotional and behavioural challenges.



*Seeds of Hope* helps to support the Employability Skills Training Program and was given extra assistance when in late 2006, designated donations were made by The William Frank Hayball Charitable Foundation and the Knights of Columbus - St. Jude Council. The DFCC would like to thank our donors for their support and our community partners for providing co-op placements and training opportunities for our youth.

To learn more about the Employability Skills Training Program, please see our cover story.

## **More Sports News**

Northminster United Church has once again partnered with the DFCC, offering the church's gymnasium as a place for our youth and staff to organize sports activities. As an extra bonus this past year, the Raptors Foundation donated game tickets, and various corporate and private donors donated Maple Leafs Hockey tickets, allowing youth to enjoy two very exciting games in Toronto. Thorsons EVT also donated tickets for youth clients and their families to enjoy a great evening out at Mosport.

## **Community Fundraising Supports Seeds of Hope**

### **Youth Helping Youth**

For a second year in a row, students from Trafalgar Castle School donated a portion of their Charity Bazaar proceeds to *Seeds of Hope*. Students volunteer each year, making this event a wonderful success in order to help various charities.

### **Cooking Up Sweet Success**

On March 1, 2007, Trinity United Church in Bowmanville hosted a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser with proceeds benefiting the *Seeds of Hope* campaign. Approximately 150 people braved a stormy winter night to enjoy a delicious meal that included salad, spaghetti, dessert and both hot & cold beverages.

Over the years the Optimist Club of Oshawa has supported the DFCC in various ways. In the Fall of 2006, the Club hosted a Charity BBQ with event proceeds benefiting our campaign.

### **St. George's Anglican Church to host Charity Golf Tournament**

*Proceeds to support DFCC and other local charities*

DFCC, along with Kids Help Phone, WindReach Farm and the St. George's Anglican Church outreach ministry, are the lucky charitable recipients of the St. George's Anglican Church Alex Mines Annual Charity Golf Tournament. The event takes place on September 13, 2007, at Whispering Ridge Golf Club in Brooklin.

To inquire about golf fees and/or sponsorships, please contact St. George's Anglican Church at 905.683.7981.

For more news about other great community fundraisers supporting *Seeds of Hope*, please refer to articles on p.5 and the Nutrition Program article on p.6.

**Please support Seeds of Hope  
and help create  
'The Promise of a Brighter Future for our Kids'**

**Golf Tournaments • School Fundraisers • Auctions  
Bowl-a-thons • Benefit Performances • Product Sales**

If YOU represent a group that could host a fundraising event to support the Durham Family Court Clinic's *Seeds of Hope* campaign, please call Resource Development at

**905.436.6754, ext. 233**



# Thank You

## 2nd Annual Charity Dinner & Theatre Night raises almost \$21,000 in support of Seeds of Hope

On February 22, 2007, the DFCC held its 2nd Annual Charity Dinner & Theatre Night at Class Act Dinner Theatre in Whitby. The evening featured the British comedy, "When the Cat's Away", as well as live and silent auctions. Rockford Varcoe, from Class Act, acted as the Master of Ceremonies, with the DFCC's Executive Director, Bonnie Gagné and Board Chair, Carla Baetz, welcoming guests. Paul Koukofikas, Business Development Manager from TD Waterhouse, the event's lead sponsor, also addressed the audience and thanked them for supporting our fundraiser.



Welcoming guests to DFCC's charity dinner. From left to right: Paul Koukofikas from TD Waterhouse, DFCC Executive Director Bonnie Gagné, Rocky Varcoe from Class Act Dinner Theatre and Dr. Carla Baetz, DFCC Board Chair.

The DFCC's Board of Directors and Staff express sincere appreciation to our sponsors, donors, guests, to all those who participated in our live and silent auctions, and to Class Act Dinner Theatre for providing a most enjoyable dinner and talented performance of, "When the Cat's Away". A special thank you is extended to DFCC Board member Laurie Pietras for volunteering to secure the evening's auction donations.



Charity Dinner guests take time to bid on their favourite Silent Auction items



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