



REALTORS® Give Back

Tom Lebour

TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

January 15, 2010

Although we are very privileged to live in a country that is ranked fourth in the world on the United Nations' Human Development Index, which measures health, knowledge and standard of living, there is still much work to be done to help those less fortunate. It's estimated for example, that one in three Toronto children live in poverty.

Greater Toronto REALTORS® though, are working to change statistics like this one. Throughout the year, they routinely give back to the communities in which they live and work.

The Children's Breakfast Program is one example of how they're working make a difference to Toronto families on a daily basis. A joint venture between the Toronto Real Estate Board and the Toronto District School Board's Toronto Foundation for Student Success, the Children's Breakfast Program provides nutritious breakfasts to 1900 children each week in 11 different schools. Many GTA REALTORS® are involved in this effort, and since its inception, the Children's Breakfast Program has grown to include eight sponsoring Brokerages and one large corporation: TDCanada Trust.

Given that our city's future depends on its young people, REALTORS® have developed a program to support their post-secondary education pursuits as well. Each year two \$5,000 scholarships are awarded to graduating GTA high school students based on an essay writing competition. This year scholarships were awarded to Victoria Park Collegiate Institute graduate Cristiana Mergianian who is now studying at Queen's University and St. Michael's College School's Konrad Teichman who now attends the University of Toronto.

A number of shelter-related causes also receive Greater Toronto REALTORS® support, through the REALTORS Care Foundation. This year alone, the Toronto Real

Estate Board presented grants totaling \$171,000 to 20 charities on behalf of its Members. A hospice, centres for homeless youths, a refugee reception service, a community outreach program, affordable housing organizations and numerous women's shelters were among the recipients.

Greater Toronto REALTORS® are in fact, so committed to supporting the work of the REALTORS Care Foundation that for the past two consecutive years they have asked TREB to make a donation equivalent to \$1 per Member, per month for a year. In 2009 that contribution was more than \$342,000.

They're quick to roll up their sleeves for this cause as well, generating an additional \$10,000 in support for the Foundation through a fundraising motorcycle ride that took place in July.

Another summer event, TREB's Annual Charity Golf Classic raised more than \$10,000 for the Salvation Army of Toronto.

The individual efforts undertaken by REALTORS® are also recognized each year, with TREB's Civic Service Award. This year's recipients were REALTORS® Susan Gucci, who has adopted leadership roles on a number of the Toronto District School Board's parent councils, and Norman T. Jones, who in addition to his numerous volunteer roles, has raised funds to send seriously ill children on trips of special interest.

I hope that the work of Greater REALTORS® has made a positive difference in the life of someone you know this year.

Tom Lebour is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 28,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.