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Olympic Spirit Lives on in Community and Environmental Initiatives

Barrie, ON – When Bill Hamilton, a REALTOR® with Sutton Group - Incentive Realty Inc.* filled in his application to be one of 12,000 Olympic torchbearers across Canada, he pledged to help improve the environment by starting a battery and ink cartridge collection program at his office. "Each torchbearer makes a pledge to improve their community or the local environment and no matter how small it may appear, when multiplied by 12,000, it makes for a substantial impact and awareness nationwide," says Bill. On December 29, 2009, his dream became a reality. He carried the torch for thousands of cheering Barrie residents.

"Seeing the reaction of all the people lining the streets also made the event special as the Olympic spirit was evident in their faces. Now that it has come and gone, I am still reliving the experience when I am invited to bring my Olympic torch to various groups including school children, Cubs, Beavers, Brownies and Sparks. "The kids are so excited and have lots of questions. They share their aspirations and national pride. I hope that the Olympic spirit inspires them to reach for their goals."

Regarding Bill's recycling goals, he started the collection program at Sutton Group – Incentive Realty Inc.* on November 12, 2009 and it is still going strong. He takes the toner printer cartridges to the Ferndale Elementary School and the school receives funds from a recycling rebate program. The small effort is worthwhile since cartridges require several litres of petroleum to produce and take many hundreds of years to decompose. Reusing or recycling them is cost effective and environmentally friendly.

Bill was also interested in collecting batteries since people often throw them in the trash not realizing that they can eventually leach cadmium, lead, mercury and other toxic substances into the soil and water. He takes the batteries to the City of Barrie Hazardous Waste Disposal Depot.

"I realized what one family could collect just from our own efforts at home over the years and thought that I should bring that initiative to the workplace. With such a large office of over 140 sales agents and support staff, I wanted to give everyone an easy option for safe disposal rather than taking the convenient route of pitching their batteries and cartridges into the garbage pail."

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