

Muskoka Mosaic: Introducing Grant Wager



NEED A LIFT? Grant Wager of Motion Specialties stops for a photo in the back of a converted van before taking it to a client's house to demonstrate what options are available. After 20 years away, he's glad to be back in Huntsville.

By Paula Boon

Grant Wager knows how important it is to be able to get around.

As a member of the town's accessibility advisory committee, salesperson for a medical mobility equipment company, and father of a child in a wheelchair, he has a unique perspective on issues faced by people with disabilities.

"People have a tendency to stop and look when someone's in a wheelchair," says Wager. "But someone like my son is no different from anyone else. He's just in a wheelchair. Society's getting better at accepting people with disabilities, but we have a ways to go yet. We just have to get by the stereotypes."

Wager is happy to see the strides the town is making toward becoming accessible for everyone, and he has had a hand in that process for last two years. "Being on Huntsville's accessibility advi-

sory committee is good," he says. "I get to have insight into what the town is proposing."

He cites the ramp to the town dock and the new River Mill playground as steps in the right direction. Wager notes, though, that everyone in the community has to play a part in ensuring accessibility. For example, a pet peeve of his is when people park in disability spots. "It's not fair to the individuals who need them," he says.

Born in Huntsville, Wager went to Huntsville Public School and Huntsville High School. After a few years of work, he decided it was time to spread his wings and moved to Toronto in 1982.

In 1985 he was hired by Motion Specialties as a wheelchair technician and warehouse manager. "I enjoyed learning about the equipment," says Wager, noting that this included wheelchairs, stair lifts, elevators and van conversions.

He stayed for nine years, eventually moved into sales with another medical mobility equipment company. "It was fun to deal with the end user," he says.

When he decided Toronto really wasn't the place for him, Wager moved to the town of Waterdown outside of Hamilton. Soon after, his life changed in an unexpected way. "I went to a wheelchair clinic, sold a wheelchair to a young man and his mother, and ended up marrying his mom," he says.

That was eight years ago. The couple married in 2005 at Falcon Lodge. They had a custom house built in the country near Utterson and moved that same year.

Wager had always intended to return to the Huntsville area someday, but it was a family tragedy that drew him back. "My youngest sister was killed in a car accident near town seven years ago," he says. "That really started the process. You never know what's going to happen."

He is working again for Motion Specialties, but this time he feels an even greater connection to his clients. "I'm so excited to be back in the community to help my friends' parents and everyone who needs help," he says. "Every individual is different, which makes the job interesting. After 25 years in the industry, not a day goes by that I don't learn something new."

In their free time, Wager and his family are very active. They get together with a group of friends weekly to play euchre, get out often on snowmachines in the winter and four-wheelers when the weather's warmer, and enjoy the pool in their yard.

Wager is also happy just to spend time working in his yard. "I love lawn work," he says. "One of the most relaxing things is to cut the grass."

Family is Wager's first priority, although his job comes a close second. Many clients call him at home when they have problems with their medical mobility devices, and he does his best to help out. "One time a man called me at 3 a.m.," he recalls. "The power was out, and he was stuck in a reclined position in a lift chair. I went over there, put a battery in and got him out."

To Wager, the extra hours he spends helping clients are worth it. "You feel good about yourself when you help other people," he says.

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Public meeting on new fire hall tonight, July 29

The Town of Huntsville is hosting a public meeting this evening to discuss possible new locations for the Port Sydney fire hall.

Starting at 7 p.m. the meeting will start with a presentation by fire chief and director of protective services Steve Hernen, then residents will be able to ask questions and provide feedback, said town chief administrative officer Kelly Pender.

The new fire hall, which has a construction budget of \$1.2 million, will be funded two-thirds by the provincial and federal governments and one-third by the municipality.

The town's portion is expected to come from both development charges reserves and the fire department reserves.

The meeting will be held at the Port Sydney Community Centre. For more information call 789-5201.

Request for Public Opinion on the Proposed Nursing Home Annual Licence Renewal of

Fairvern Nursing Home, Huntsville
Muskoka Landing, Huntsville

In accordance with the *Nursing Homes Act*, public opinion is being requested prior to a final decision being made on the above.

If you have comments or opinions and wish to bring them to the attention of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, you may submit them by **August 31, 2009** to:

Director under the Nursing Homes Act
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Performance Improvement and Compliance Branch
Licensing, Education and Appeals
55 St. Clair Avenue West, 8th Floor, Suite 800
Toronto, Ontario M4V 2Y7
Phone: 416-327-7345 Fax: 416-327-7763

Please include the name of the nursing home and quote Project #076-10 on all written submissions.

The Director will consider all submissions before making a final decision.



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Huntsville Dragonboat Festival
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Avery Beach boat launch & beach area will be closed from 9 p.m., Thursday, August 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday, August 8 for the annual Huntsville Dragonboat Festival.

www.huntsvilledragonboat.com

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