

# Muskoka Mosaic: Introducing Jo Walton

By Paula Boon

Family is everything to Jo Walton. "And family isn't just the people who live in your house," says the Port Sydney mother of four.

Fittingly, Walton has spent almost 15 years supporting local families as a program facilitator at area Ontario Early Years centres. She describes the centres as places where anyone caring for or working with children ages 0 to 6 can come and spend time in a warm, fun environment.

"There's everything there for children, for learning and socializing and playing – all different centres and creative activities and books and circle time," she says, adding that there are also resources, workshops and information for parents and caregivers.

Walton and her husband Keith grew up in and near Markham, and each had three siblings. "He was my big brother's good buddy," she says.

When they married in 1983, they knew they wanted to have four children of their own. In 1988, with two pre-schoolers and a baby on the way, a job came up for Keith at a local golf course. They found their current house in Port Sydney and knew it was the place for them. Walton offered home day-care to supplement the family income while still staying home with her children.

For years, Walton was active on V.K. Greer Public School's parent council. "I helped to organize the first-ever fun fair in 1990," she says. "Actually, my youngest daughter Kayla was born that night. She was known as the fun fair baby."

When her children began playing hockey



ALL SET: Jo Walton of Port Sydney gets her new kayak ready to go for a paddle on nearby Mary Lake.

and lacrosse, Walton volunteered on the Huntsville Minor Lacrosse board and the Jr. B lacrosse board and was manager for a hockey team.

"We were extremely busy driving here, there and everywhere," she recalls. "The kids were involved in rep sports as well, travelling out of town."

Every summer, the Waltons slow down and connect with their extended family at the family cottage near Barry's Bay. "It's still the perfect cottage," says Walton. "There is no running water, no electricity. I love it."

No matter what the season, the Waltons'

home is always open, and their harvest table is often full. Most weekends, they get together with family and friends to share a meal. Twelve people is considered a small group, and 20 a bigger one. "The more the merrier," Walton says. "There's always room for one more, and there's always enough food."

That philosophy extends beyond meal times: a friend of her children's who needed a place to stay lived with the Waltons for a year and a half.

Walton says her house is small, but she likes it that way. "The kids have always

shared rooms, and even if we won the lottery, they would still share rooms," she says. "We're not inside much anyway. If we can be outside, we're out hiking or snowshoeing."

For the past eight years, another outdoor pastime in the spring has been making maple syrup with their neighbours.

"We light a fire in the yard, and everyone helps to empty buckets," Walton says. "This year was our best ever. We made about 42 litres."

Even the neighbourhood dogs are embraced: there is one invisible fence surrounding three homes so the pooches can visit one another whenever they want.

This year there's been a big change in Walton's life: her final two children left home in September.

"It took me a long time to get used to how quiet the house was," she says. "Now three of the kids are back home for the summer and the car's never here. It's great."

In the coming years, Walton and her husband are looking forward to travelling. Walton spent several months in Sri Lanka in the early 1980s as part of Canada World Youth, and Keith travelled to Australia, Fiji and Hawaii around the same time. "We'd love to see more of Canada," Walton says.

In the meantime, Walton loves being in Port Sydney. "This is a community, not just a place to live," she says. "We're lucky to be a part of so many families. We have no intention of going anywhere."

Thanks to Pamela Steel for suggesting that Jo Walton be profiled. To explore the complete collection of Muskoka Mosaic profiles, go to [www.thelifecollector.com](http://www.thelifecollector.com).



GRAND SPORTS FANS: Cody Hodgson (left), drafted last summer by the Vancouver Canucks, and Matt Duchene from Haliburton (right), now with the Colorado Avalanche, pause during an autograph session for a photo with former NHL player Glen Sharpley at Sharpley's Source for Sports. The two former OHL Brampton Battalion hockey players made a visit to Huntsville for the grand opening of the new sporting goods store Saturday afternoon in Huntsville.

PHOTO BY DEBBIE BRADLEY

## Come enjoy more Concerts in the Park

Three down and three more to go.

Every Wednesdays for the next three weeks there will be a concert in the park at 7 p.m. at the town. It is a great way to spend a summer's evening in Huntsville. Bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on, a toonie for some tunes and some friends or family to enjoy the concert.

In the event of inclement weather you can call 789-6648 for cancellation information after 4 p.m. on the day of the performance.

The Cameron of Lochiel Pipes and Drums will play today. At present the group has 17 members and has been performing in and around the Muskoka area. The group was formed in 1952 and members wear the tartan of the Cameron Clan. If you love to hear the bagpipes, don't miss this concert.

Norm Forrester is on Aug. 12. Forrester has been captivating audiences everywhere since his 2004 CD Luckyman made it to Canadian Country radio. Always a favourite with the crowd at Concerts in the Park, he performs some country classics along with many of his own songs.

Aug. 19 finishes the series with the Northern Lights Steel Orchestra.

See you all at the town dock on Wednesdays.

For more information regarding Concerts in the Park contact 789-6648.

## Welcome Back

### Edmonds GM

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### Donna Schnurr

to our sales staff.



Donna's 19 year career in the automobile industry shows great value to her customers.

Although not officially at the dealership until the end of August, Donna invites her loyal customers to contact her directly at 788-5675 or feel free to call the dealership at 789-7500 and leave a message. E-mail [donna@edmondsgm.com](mailto:donna@edmondsgm.com)

Donna will gladly set up a time to meet you or if it's just information you require, she will get what you need and get back to you.

All of us here at Edmonds GM welcome Donna back!

Sincerely,

Richard Janssen

General Sales Manager

# Edmonds



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## PUBLIC NOTICE BOARD



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Hours of operation: Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### UPCOMING AUGUST MEETINGS

Tuesday, August, 11th, 2009

Finance & Corporate Services Committee Meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Council Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August, 12th, 2009

Parks, Recreation & Trails Advisory Committee Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August, 25th, 2009

Council (Planning) Meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Heritage Advisory Committee Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Meetings will be held in the Municipal Council Chambers

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### Temporary Road Closure

Where: Spruce Street and Terrace Court, Baysville (riverside portion)

When: August 8th, 2009 - 10:00 a.m. to August 9th, 2009 - 6:00 p.m.

Event: Baysville Riverfront Arts and Crafts Festival (Centennial Park)

An overnight camping exemption has been approved from August 7th-9th, 2009



### ADVERTISING SIGNS

A permit is required for any sign erected, located or displayed within the Township of Lake of Bays (with some exceptions). Contact the Township By-law Department at 635-2272 ext. 243 for further information or visit

[www.lakeofbays.on.ca/Bylaws/07-137.pdf](http://www.lakeofbays.on.ca/Bylaws/07-137.pdf)

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