

She's fit to be the best

Barrie business owner Nancy Cook is one of three finalists for the Can-Fit-Pro Fitness Professional of the Year Award.

This award recognizes a Can-Fit-Pro certified and practicing professional member "who has demonstrated exceptional leadership, motivation, and technical skills and has inspired clients to achieve their goals," officials noted.

Cook launched her fitness business Go Figure! Family Fun and Fitness four years ago in Barrie.

It is the first facility in Canada to receive national recognition for compliance with Canadian Fitness Safety Standards. Go Figure! made national headlines in the *Canadian Professional Fitness Trade* magazine, as well as in local media.

Can Fit Pro will be announcing the winner and presenting the award on Friday, Aug. 21, at the International Fitness and Club Business Conference and Trade Show at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Between Sept. 2008 and May 2009, Cook created Barrie's Biggest Loser Challenge, which inspired 24 city residents to change their lifestyles.

What's there to like?

Barrie hires consultant to survey businesses

By Laurie Watt

Barrie has hired a consultant to find out what local businesses like about the city – and what the city could do to improve

"We've retained Millier Dickinson Blais, a highly-respected group that's been retained by cities we'd like to be like. To our pleasant surprise, they were the least expensive, at \$52,000," said Barrie's economic development director Hany Kirolos.

With offices in Toronto, Hamilton and Harrow-smith, the company bills itself as a "hands-on,

results-oriented economic development consulting firm."

Among its largest clients are Calgary and Waterloo, as well as the University of Waterloo, Tiffany and Co., and the Ontario East Economic Development Partnership.

The company has also done some work locally – with Innisfil on a branding initiative, with Collingwood on an industrial needs analysis, and earlier this year, with Orillia, on an economic development strategy.

The main recommendations to Orillia were to develop a new recreation centre and the waterfront.

"They're already familiar with the area, which gives them a huge head start," Kirolos added.

The project's ultimate goal is to create an

economic development strategy and action plan for 2011, a move included in the city's annual budget.

The first step is an e-mail survey followed by one-on-one meetings with 35 "key stakeholders."

"These interviews will include a candid and honest discussion on the municipality's barriers and challenges to economic growth," Kirolos tells the stakeholders in a letter requesting their help.

The comments the consultant collects will contribute to a "consensus-based report and form the foundation of a new strategy for economic growth," he added.

A report pulling the findings together, along with recommendations, is expected in late September, he said.



\$1,000 FOR LITERACY

SHARON BAMFORD PHOTO

The Royal Bank presented a \$1,000 donation to the Barrie Literacy Council on June 22, while honouring the work of RBC employee and Barrie Literacy volunteer Susan Lee. Lee will be the new chairperson for the Barrie Literacy Council in the coming year. Representing the Barrie Literacy Council (from left) is Connie Morgan and Susan Lee with Brent Miller and Michael D'Amato of Royal Bank on Bayfield Street in Barrie.

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