

Crazy Steph says, "This is just a bump in the road!"



Rachel Barkhouse, Ashley Clusiaux and Lidea Cloutier were pleased lend a hand, helping out with fund raising efforts, in support of Stephanie Baker on Dec. 2nd at the Masstown Market.

By Linda Harrington

Stephanie Baker found herself overcome with emotion as she looked around the Masstown Market and saw so many people wearing t-shirts, with her face stencilled on the front, and the words "Help us, Help Steph."

Co-workers at the Masstown Market had organized a day of fund raising activities on Dec. 2nd, in support of their friend, whom they always call "Crazy Steph". There was a dedicated group who braved the cold, rocking the day away in a Rock-A-Thon and hosting a BBQ over the lunch hour, while inside the Market there were more supporters doing face painting and holding a bake/craft sale.

Stephanie doesn't mind the nickname "Crazy Steph", given to her by fellow employees. She says it totally reflects her personality, "I work like crazy, never stopping, and have a good time doing it."

One would never know to look at this fun loving 31 year-old, that she is in the fight for her life, and Stephanie can hardly believe it herself. "I am twelve weeks into this and still don't have a final diagnosis," she says, reflecting on the extremes of the last three months. "I have had numerous biopsies and surgeries to try and get to a diagnosis, hopefully I'll get the results next week, but I haven't even started on any treatment at this point."

Stephanie has worked at the Masstown Market for the past 2 years, and as head cook for the last year. She moved here from Lunenburg and lives in what was once the "old manse" in Glenholme. Everything was going along fine until late this past summer. "I loved my work and was anxious to get back to work, after being off for a few weeks in August with a back injury. I felt sort of strange when I started back to work and later that evening I had severe abdominal pains and fell unconscious on my bathroom floor," she recalls. "When I woke up in the hospital, they first thought I had infected kidney stones, but after several x-rays and CT scans I began to realize something was seriously wrong."

The tests showed Stephanie had a massive number of tumors in her abdomen and her bone density was way off the norm. She says the doctors think she has a rare form of Castleman's Disease and but not very much is known about it. The plan is to treat it similar to lymphoma and she expects to begin treatments in Halifax within the next few weeks.

"I will be having treatments three times a week in Halifax and no doubt will lose this," she says, pointing to her beautiful long hair, "But that's nothing. This is just a bump in the road. It's not beating me."

With no family in the area, "Crazy Steph" says the Masstown Market staff have become her family, showering her with loads of love and



"Crazy Steph", is keeping a positive attitude as she begins treatment for a rare form of Castleman's Disease.

kindness. "I have gotten a lifetime of love from these people," she says looking around at all the people helping with the fund raising activities. Steph gets choked up as she continues, "How can all this be for me? It is unbelievable, I feel like a celebrity."

Market owner Laurie Jennings was pleased with the show of support for Stephanie, who he says is such an inspiration to everyone. "Her positive attitude is simply amazing and inspiring. Steph is keeping very optimistic as she faces her greatest challenge and yet she continues to makes everyone around her smile and feel good."

Laurie says he was very proud of everything the staff has done to support their fellow employee and at this year's staff Christmas Party there will be a Silent Auction, with the proceeds going to help Stephanie with expenses she will incur during her treatments.

"Crazy Steph" wants to thank the Masstown Market and everyone involved in the "Help Steph" day, saying it is "more support than she could have ever dreamed". The Market Staff would like to thank: Big Dog, Canada Bread, Cat Country, Glenholme Petro Canada, Masstown market, Shoreline Journal, tshirtsrus.ca, Tony's Meats and all that donated, pledged or purchased goods at our BBQ, Craft/Bake Sale and Rock-a-thon. Winners of the gas cards were Marilyn Patriquin of Wallace and Calvin Wright, Harmony (who donated his card back to Steph). Thank you to all it was a great success!

Anyone who would like to add to the donations for this courageous young woman can drop off donations at the Masstown Market or contact Bonnie at 662-2816.



Surrounded by love, Stephanie Baker (center) was feeling the love and support of her friends and co-workers as they held a "Help Us, Help Steph" Day at the Masstown Market, which included several fund raisers including a Rock-A-Thon.



Brent Garnum and JD Robichaud were busy looking after the BBQ at the "Help Us, Help Steph" day.



Santa stopped by for breakfast at Saint James United Church on Dec. 8th and was joined by (front l to r) Makayla Merzbach, Kyrie Morse, Alexis Merzbach, Aiden Myers, Hailey Field;(back l to r)- Alexis Morse, Marshall Field and Heather McKay. (Harrington Photo)

Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy

By Ray Ivany

Last week I was honoured - and if I'm honest, a bit daunted - to take on the challenge of leading Nova Scotians in an open and frank discussion about how we want to shape our economic future.

We are at a critical point as a province. We have before us opportunities on a scale we haven't seen in generations: the Irving ship-building contract, renewed offshore oil exploration, the potential for oceans energy and construction of the Maritime Link to name a few.

Our history has given us similar opportunities in the past. And while we have profited from them, I would argue that we have failed to leverage them to their full potential. As a result, we have stopped short of achieving lasting prosperity.

Extracting the full potential of the 30-year shipbuilding contract in terms of local spending and temporary employment gains is just the starting point.

I suggest the true measure of our success will be the number of new or expanded, globally-competitive, sustainable businesses that grow out of that opportunity, and then go on to thrive independent of it.

We have all the raw ingredients to bake a bigger economic pie: an educated workforce, a unique package of resources and proximity to markets. But to do so requires that we look boldly to the future and start working together.

The examples of success

are around us. Entrepreneurs throughout this province have found ways to innovate and take advantage of the new global realities to create value-added products and services they can sell to the world.

The job of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy over the next 18 months, will be to engage people from all walks of life from every part of the province: first, to develop a shared understanding of the realities of our situation, both positive and negative; and second, to encourage the kind of grown-up conversation we need to have about the Nova Scotia we want for our children.

Some people have warned me: "you know there are no magic solutions," and I am the first to agree.

However, I believe with all my being that there are solutions. There are steps we can take to shape the future we want. We don't need magic. We need to harness the intelligence, will and creativity that are our most powerful resources.

My fellow Commission members - John Bragg, Irene d'Entremont, Dan Christmas and Susanna Fuller - will be joining me in public meetings around the province over the coming months. Please consider joining us there or connecting with us online. I am looking forward to our conversations.

Ray Ivany has been chosen to lead the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy. The commission's offices are located at the Innovation Park in Bible Hill

Helping Families and Businesses Recover From Flooding

After a disaster, people sometimes need help to get back on their feet.

The province is providing disaster financial assistance for people in Colchester and Pictou counties. In fact, we recently increased the maximum allowable assistance to \$80,000 for individuals and small businesses and \$200,000 for not-for-profit organizations.

If you have uninsurable damages created by the heavy rains of September 22-24, you may be eligible. **Apply by February 8, 2013 at emo.gov.ns.ca.**

For help, call toll free 1-866-424-5620 Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

