



Sharole Tylor and her son Carsten have been busy painting new banners to spruce up the neighbourhood.

Photo-Dan Toulgoet

Banner year for Mountain View residents

By Cheryl Rossi-Staff writer

Mountain View's street banner project was so successful the first time around that Sharole Tylor volunteered to take charge when the banners needed to be replaced.

Now 30 cheery new screened and hand-painted banners brighten Fraser between 24th and 31st avenues, adding vibrancy to the struggling street.

"The first time we did it, the business area was rather dead," said Tylor, a 10-year resident of the area, about the initial project in 2002. "So when we got them up, all of a sudden things started looking a little neater and we got a few more businesses in that said they really liked the area. So now we thought if we continue this, and it looks a little more prosperous, then maybe we will get fewer empty storefronts."

The original banners became worn and were taken down in 2006. That's when Tylor and other volunteers got busy. Sixty children from the out of school care program and Grade 3 students from Sir Richard McBride School Annex painted banners, while 20 adults got creative at the Kensington Community Centre.

Tylor's seven-year-old son Carsten and his six-year-old neighbour Sophie from across the street painted a centipede, ladybugs and other "creepy crawlers" on their banner, which was produced through a workshop organized at Little Mountain Out of School Care at McBride elementary. "They had such a hoot," Tylor said of the children who got involved. "It was just the thought of having their art up on the street."

Lilli Wong, an area resident who was on maternity leave at the time, provided art direction for the project after reading about the trials and tribulations the project faced in *The Neighbour*, a local newspaper. She instructed each child to draw images that reminded them of their neighbourhood. They painted two to four drawings in the centre of a sunflower on each of the banners. Her favourite creation features a hockey player and a cat.

The Mountain View Neighbourhood Group received an \$8,000 neighbourhood matching grant from the parks board in 2006, but needed to raise more money before the project could take flight. It hoped to auction off the original banners from 2002 that weren't too worn-some of the people who had created them were willing to buy them. But without warning the city took them down and the banners went missing.

An owner of the local Wine Castle brew shop canvassed other enterprises for donations, and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House volunteered to handle the money and issue tax receipts. A neighbour who works for ICI Paint arranged for donations of paint, a movie production company shooting a film starring Renee Zellweger in their area contributed \$1,000 to their cause and the owners of a new local gas station provided funds that were matched by the Imperial Oil Company. The Mount Pleasant and Cedar Cottage neighbourhood houses also provided small grants.

The banners are up and neighbours are invited to celebrate their accomplishments Sunday at noon on the corner of 28th and Fraser.

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