

Portraits of Giving honours Aurora entrepreneur



By Brock Weir

As a local entrepreneur with a dedication to giving back to her community, Ingrid Kulbach has become a familiar face to many in Aurora.

Over the years, she has seen her contacts and colleagues immortalized in the classic black and white photography of Richmond Hill photographer Karen Merk, honoured for their years of making a difference in the world around them.

This year, however, it was Ms. Kulbach's turn to receive that call from Ms. Merk who wanted to showcase her in the latest series of her annual exhibition Portraits of Giving.

Ms. Merk founded Portraits of Giving to showcase people from across York Region who have had an impact on their communities in ways large and small, shining a light on them not only through her photography, but also through the written word in a book that accompanies each year's show.

"I was very surprised to be included because so many of my good friends and business colleagues in Aurora have been physically involved in helping the community," says Ms. Kulbach, whose portrait is now on display with the rest of the honourees at the Skylight Gallery at Aurora Town Hall.

Founder of *fraktals*, a local candy company which she recently sold, Ms. Kulbach was often approached to feature her sweet treats at various community fundraisers, whether they were large scale gigs to benefit Southlake Regional Health Centre or Markham Stouffville Hospital, or events decidedly smaller in scope to raise money for a particular family in need.

At first, she was happy to do so, but soon giving back in this way became a way of life.

"It felt like a good thing to do and the right thing to do," she explains. "People who needed help were getting help and it really wasn't anything to think about. The appreciation was lovely too."

"This is kind of character in business," adds Ms. Kulbach, casting an eye over the portraits of her fellow honourees. "It is sort of like a socially responsible, good and important thing that I think more businesses are becoming aware of and are participating in now. They talk about this triple bottom line thing where, okay, you're going to be financially responsible, socially responsible and environmentally responsible."

For Melony Teague, who authored this year's exhibition book, part of the fun is meeting people like Ingrid and finding out what

makes them tick.

?I jumped on the opportunity [to participate in Portraits of Giving two years ago] because it is really an honour to sit down with these people, listen to their stories, dig deeper and pull out what the motivation is behind why they do what they do, and showcase things people might not know about them, including their childhood history, who inspired them and why they give back,? says Ms. Teague.

?For Ingrid, it is just her attitude. When people ask her to give, it is not a big question for her. She does it because it is the right thing to do. Her attitude is very positive. She is a strong, independent woman, but with a heart of gold ? and that is a great combination!?

Portraits of Giving runs at the Skylight Gallery through Friday, June 19, before opening at the King Township Museum on July 6. For more information, including future tour dates, visit www.merkphotography.com.