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PENINSULA NEWS REVIEW

A guiding light

By Christine van Reeuyk - Peninsula News Review

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Jacky Stevens lives much of her life surrounded by kids — and she loves it.

The landed immigrant is fairly new to Canada, having lived on the Peninsula only four-plus years, but she's wrapped herself in giving to the youth of the community through both her church and the local Girl Guides.

"My kids are a certain age and I came in contact with things like Girl Guides, and the more I got to know about the organization the more I liked it," she said. She started at the bottom and rapidly worked her way through the positions of Brownie leader, Guide leader and district commissioner — at times all three at once.

"I think it's a really good organization, I think it's great for girls. It's a really positive image. We teach girls to have a positive image," the mom of two girls explained. "If you're involved with them you get to know your kids well."

Stevens' upbeat attitude, vibrant energy and neverending smile warranted her nomination as a heart of the Peninsula community. She was honoured with a 2010 Hearts of the Community Award for service to families and children. The awards, sponsored by the Peninsula News Review and Beacon Community Services, were handed out Feb. 17 during a ceremony and luncheon at the Mary Winspear Centre.

"She epitomizes the true spirit of Guiding today, adventurous, caring, fun and busy — yes always busy," wrote nominator Patricia Sinnott. "The hours that Jacky gives to Guiding are uncountable. She has also had the task of forming a new district out of two fiercely independent districts. She has kept her sanity and also instilled in her new district a great sense of pride."

She was a parent helper in Brownies in England, and knew it was a good way to meet people.

"You meet people and that's so important because otherwise you become isolated," Stevens said. "You can have some fun, some laughs, and make friends. The more you give to the community, the more you get back in friendship and fun and it makes the community a better place to live for everyone."

Guiding is not the end of her involvement with youth. Stevens is a Sunday school teacher at St. Andrew's parish and is pursuing a youth group there. She's also been active (as president and vice president) with the Parent Advisory Council at Sidney elementary school and with the Safe Arrival



Sidney volunteer Jacky Stevens keeps kids in the right frame of mind in church and Guiding.

Christine van Reeuyk/News Staff

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program at North Saanich middle school.

"I love being part of the community," Stevens said. "It takes a whole community to raise a child and I believe the more you put in the more you get out."

Learn more about girl guides in the area online at www.svgirlguides.bc.ca.

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