



Bob Vrbanac Photo

Carly Kuntz, owner of The Waters, was the winner of Randstad Canada's 2013 Women Shaping Business Award for efforts that include the launch of the new Women of Merit magazine in January that celebrates local women and their success stories.

Deep Waters

By Bob Vrbanac, Chronicle Staff

Randstad Canada holds an annual contest for women business leaders who help shape their communities.

It provides a forum for female business leaders to discuss their challenges, offer ways to overcome their difficulties and provide each other with ways to connect and support each other.

The definition of the award sounds a lot like what Carly Kuntz, owner of The Waters urban spa in uptown Waterloo, has been doing on a daily basis, whether it's through the local Momz in Biz group or a new venture she's launched called Women of Merit with business partners Lesley Warren and Janet Weldon.

That new magazine project, released in January, honours extraordinary local women and tells their stories of personal or professional success.

So it was no surprise that Kuntz, who will be celebrating eight years of owning and operating The Waters in August, was named Randstad Canada's 2013 Women Shaping Business Award. The only one who might have been surprised was Kuntz, who was nominated for the award by friend Donna Diebel.

"I was very surprised, I didn't know much about the nomination or anything else," said Kuntz. "I was even more excited about it after we got to choose the local charity that Randstad would donate \$10,000 to in our community."

Even that donation process was revealing. The \$10,000 donation was originally intended for a national charity, but Diebel and Kuntz convinced Randstad, a national human resources company, that it would make a bigger impact locally.

They selected Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, which operates Anselma House as a safe have for women suffering from abuse. The donation was made at a ceremony on Jan. 20.

"They initially said it had to be a national women's charity, but they allowed us to donate to Women's Crisis Services," said Kuntz. "We know about the good work they are doing at Anselma House and Haven House in Cambridge.

"For me it was important to see that money go as local as possible, and we both felt it was a good place to go and support women."

Offering support and networking opportunities is part of the work Kuntz does in addition to running a successful spa.

The mother of twins has had to balance the needs of an active family life while trying to create those networking opportunities and offer support for business women juggling those same responsibilities.

"I'm always surprised by what a tight-knit business community exists in Kitchener-Waterloo and how people really do promote entrepreneurial efforts," said Kuntz. "I feel we have a really good support network here."

An MBA grad from Wilfrid Laurier University, those efforts continue with the Women of Merit magazine. Kuntz and her partners wanted to share those success stories with the entire community.

"The women in it all have very inspiring stories," said Kuntz.

Women of Merit has its official launch Feb. 5 at the Breithaupt Building, with the goal of publishing every January.