

Business is anything but usual on Selkirk Avenue these days. Although a few vacant storefronts and abandoned lots dot the blocks that stretch from Main to Salter Street, Up Shoppe's open sign shines brightly.

Mannequins beckon to would be customers while construction workers swing hammers noisily at the framework of a new building going up next door.

An exuberant teen drags her dad inside, scouring the store for a summer outfit.

"This place is great. It's a real gem," says her dad who works over at Health Sciences Centre.

"I got my grad gown here," beams the girl. "It was seven bucks!"

Owned and operated by the neighbouring North End Women's Resource Centre, a United Way agency partner, Up Shoppe started as a clothing depot where women recovering from loss due to theft, fire or economic challenges could access affordable, sometimes free, replacements.

When word got out of the good work they were doing, there were so many donations from individuals and surrounding stores, they were overwhelmed.

Recognizing the program's potential, United Way stepped up with secure, sustained funding, allowing the organization to attract a committed and qualified staff.

"I quit a higher paying job to come work here," says Sheila Holt, the store's distribution coordinator. "I don't regret it."

Along with Corrine Campbell, retail coordinator, and Eliyanna Angelova, community economic development manager, Sheila's been able to build relationships with residents, and found some willing volunteers in the process.

But there's far more in store than a few good deals. Not only is it part of the revitalization of Selkirk Avenue, Up Shoppe has become an integral part of the community, a place where women can chat with volunteers and staff, and connect with each other and with programs and resources.

Thanks to United Way's support, staff have also developed several programs specific to the needs of neighbourhood women.

Women like Barb Roccola who participate in the Community Wages Program.

Barb had been a housekeeper in the healthcare field. Every day for eight years,

MOVIN' ON UP!



ELIYANA ANGELOVA AND BARB ROCCOLA REVEAL THERE'S MORE IN STORE THAN A FEW GOOD DEALS AT UP SHOPPE

HEALTHY PEOPLE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

The health of our neighbourhoods and the well-being of individuals have a profound impact on our quality of life. United Way of Winnipeg supports recreation, parenting, wellness, mental health and social programs that give people the tools, confidence and support to take better care of themselves, their families and their community.

Thanks to Winnipeg's support last campaign, United Way will invest \$9.3 million in partnerships and programs that create safer, healthier neighbourhoods where people care and support one another, and where everyone feels welcomed, valued, respected and accepted.

she worked alone, cleaning, doing laundry and making meals. Like many others in our community, she lost her security and sense of purpose when the position was cut in the face of the recent recession.

"You go through a grieving process losing a job," she says. "It was all I basically knew. I was feeling lost and didn't think I could do anything properly."

Feelings of hopelessness and despair deepened as prospect after prospect proved fruitless. Overwhelmed, Barb came to North End Women's Centre for counselling, but quickly discovered a host of supports and services, including Up Shoppe.

"Everybody was so friendly," she says. "It's a no pressure atmosphere, no matter what's piling up. That's why I wanted to volunteer."

For the first few weeks, Barb helped staff and volunteers sort and clean clothes. While similar to her last job, she was no longer working in isolation. For the first time in her life she learned what it was like to have people who depended on her and she learned to depend on them.

Staff suggested she join the Community Wages Program, a platform for retail and skills development.

"I learned how to do the cash, interact with customers. All the time I was meeting new people and earning a little bit of money."

After 18 months, Barb received a certificate of completion recognizing the time she spent in the program.

"When I was working alone, never interacting with people, you tend to lose those skills when you don't use them. I'm so glad I was here because I learned how to work with other people again. If I wasn't here I wouldn't have had the confidence or self esteem to go for the job I'm doing now. I'd probably still be looking for work."

Today Barb works in an Alzheimers neighbourhood for River East Personal Care Home, but she returns to Up Shoppe from time to time.

"Working in a care home, it's not always happy. But here people are always laughing and happy. They always have something nice to say. So if I'm having a bad day I come down here and we talk."

"I'm so proud of her," says Sheila.

"Now, if she has a problem, she addresses it rather than letting it build." 📞



BARB WANTED TO WORK AT UP SHOPPE THE MINUTE SHE WALKED THROUGH THE DOOR BUT FEAR AND SELF DOUBT NEARLY MADE HER MISS A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

INVESTING IN
SOLUTIONS
TO INSPIRE
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