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retail

CONNECTIONS

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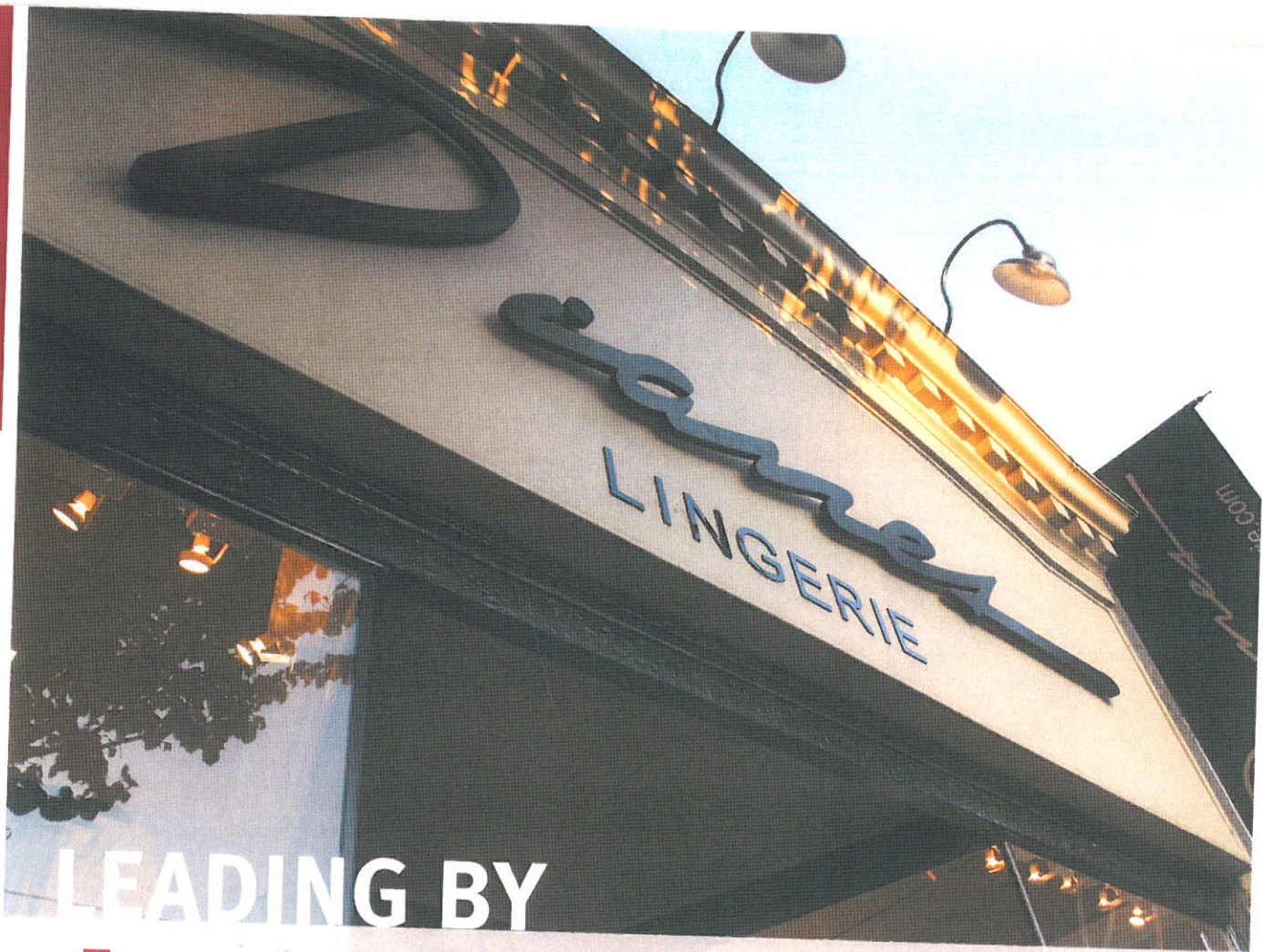
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Leading Diane's Way: Caring, Compassion and Community

Diane Thomson of Dianes Lingerie – a venerable institution in Vancouver's South Granville area and in the city itself.

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LEADING BY

Example & Strengthening a Community

Sheliza Mitha

She is known for her passion, tenacity and sincerity. She is described as a “classy lady” and the “epitome of everything that is great about independent retailers” by Sharon Townsend, executive director of the South Granville Business Improvement Association.

She is Diane Thomson of Dienes Lingerie – a venerable institution in Vancouver’s South Granville area and in the city, itself.

Since opening her store more than two decades ago, Thomson has garnered thousands of loyal customers, helped countless women, and donated both her time and money to several charitable foundations. Most notably, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, BC/Yukon Region.

When the foundation was initially created in 1992, Thomson was there. Though her business was in its early stages and times were lean, she found a way to help

by donating her time and partial proceeds during the yearly Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. Through the years, her donations have only increased.

Four years ago, when the BC Cancer Agency needed a new, specialized mammogram machine, Dienes Lingerie stepped up and donated \$10,000 to help purchase the specialized equipment. After the mammogram was acquired, Dienes Lingerie attended the unveiling of the new machine – and was joined by organizations such as WorkSafe BC and London Drugs.

Dienes was not just the only lingerie retailer present – but also the only small, independent business among a group of recognized heavyweights.

In the course of her daily business, Thomson and her staff endeavour to help improve the lives of her customers, particularly breast cancer survivors. She and her

team are there – ready to help these “ladies on their journey,” as Thomson puts it.

“We try to be there and understand when they come to our store with their problems and challenges,” she explains. “We’re very kind, understanding, good listeners – but we also help them with what they need.”

As a government-certified Pharmacare store, doctors often refer post-surgery patients to Dienes – where they can be expertly fitted for the right kind of bras and prosthesis (breast forms). Along with specialized training, her staff have been certified to assist with prosthetic fittings and to meet the unique physical and emotional needs of breast cancer survivors.

Testament to her charity work and commitment to helping others, Thomson has been donating breast forms to women in India who don’t have access to such products. Breast forms of any type aren’t avail-