



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Focal Point Studio of Photography won the top prize in the window decorating contest.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The Village Shoe Inn took second place in the window decorating contest.



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Pictures & More finished third in the window decorating contest.

## Focal Point tops decorations

By Susan Buck  
staff writer

The Christmas spirit descended on downtown Farmington last weekend — and at least three merchants were bitten by the holiday bug. Three businesses won awards in the window-decorating contest, which netted \$1,750 in free advertising space from the Farmington Observer.

The contest was co-sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the Farmington Observer.

Winners and the value of their prizes are: Focal Point Studio of Photography, 33317 Grand River, first place, \$1,000; Village Shoe Inn, 33224 Grand River, second place, \$500; Pictures and More captured third place, \$250.

The contest was part of the third annual Downtown Farmington Christmas Walk Open House, which kicked off Friday night and continued through Saturday afternoon.

"Yeah!" was co-owner Michele Jakacki's jubilant response when asked to comment on Focal Point's first place win. She and her husband, Jerry, co-own Focal Point Studio of Photography.

The Farmington Hills residents credited the store's displays to the work of two employees, Kim Barton-Graf of Southfield, an art department head and Yvonne Berry of Garden City, a photographer and artist.

THE WINDOWS feature an Art Deco setting with glamour portraits to give a 1930s atmosphere. "We got the idea from Homearama," Michele Jakacki said. "The girls designed it, and I took the pictures — under their direction."

They were also aided by Marisa Miller, another photographer. Two months were set aside to take the photographs, Michele Jakacki said.

The store's rear windows feature a traditional living room setting at Christmas time.

Michele Jakacki is planning to use the free advertising space to offer a special on glamour portraits for

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women, beginning sometime in January. "Glamour portraits are very hot right now. Women purchase it for their husbands," she said. "They're soft and done in good taste."

At Village Shoe Inn, manager Judy Brown was "thrilled and tickled to death" with the win. Diko for owners Maryanne and Roger Thibault.

At Village Shoe Inn, four windows were decorated. Two had a Christmas theme; two commercial displays were in the rear windows. "Twas the night before Christmas," was one display, complete with a Christmas mouse. The other featured Santa packing up his bags with Rudolph.

The display took two weeks and all the employees pitched in, Brown said.

Brown was unsure how the second-place prize would be used.

ANDREW BAKER, a Farmington resident, and his father, Edward Baker of Farmington Hills, co-own Pictures & More. They shared enthusiasm for their third-place prize. Their store features a Candyland theme highlighted by a large house decorated with lollipops and candy.

"We originally had the Home for

the Holidays theme, but changed it when we found out Focal Point had the same theme," Andrew Baker said.

The store didn't want to be redundant. "We did our display all in one week," Baker said.

Contest judges were: Jan Halm, advertising representative, Farmington Observer; Shirley Richardson, Farmington City Council member; and Gwen Tomkow, Farmington Area Arts Commission artist-in-residence.

During the Christmas Walk, Farmington High's marching band provided entertainment.

Santa arrived at the Village Mall at noon Saturday by fire truck, with sirens wailing, said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, DDA executive director.

The Farmington Civic Theatre offered three free showings of "Santa Claus: The Movie," with Dudley Moore.

Award-winning Free Press photographer Tony Spina autographed his book, "Tony Spina Chief Photographer," at Books Abound on Grand River.

Despite rain, the walk was a success. "The parking lots were filled to capacity," Strip Sittsamer said.

Rain canceled free popcorn handouts and a sidewalk chalk drawing event for kids.

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