

# Irene wins drummers' hearts

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DRUMROLL PLEASE: Drumming enthusiast Tyler Ackerman, left, shows off his skills to Drum City shop owner Irene Gibson who received an Awesome Service award in recognition of her own special abilities.

Helping others to discover the beat of their own drum has won a music enthusiast a national customer service award.

Irene Gibson, who owns Drum City, received an MYOB Awesome Service award for giving excellent service to seven-year-old Tyler Ackerman.

The young customer, who has a genetic disorder called Fragile X, went into the Balmoral store with his father Nial Greenstock to purchase a pair of drumsticks.

Mr Greenstock was so impressed with the professional attention Mrs Gibson gave his son, whose disorder means he displays behaviour similar to those with autism, he immediately nominated her for the award.

"Irene was very helpful and enthusiastic about his drumming," he says.

"Music in general, and drumming in particular, is something that I think a lot of special needs kids relate to.

"It was a real pleasure to meet such a knowledgeable retailer who was so keen to help us out."

As a result Tyler's parents enrolled the Edendale Primary School student in Drum City's drumming school located above the shop.

"He goes every week and loves every minute of it. He's always had rhythm and he's just totally into drumming."

Mrs Gibson says she appreciates the assortment of useful prizes and was humbled and surprised by the honour.

"When they rang me, I thought they were taking the mickey out of me," she says.

"It's brilliant. It means a lot. I have never won anything in my entire life."

She says Tyler's passion for playing the drums needs to be encouraged.

"Of course he has a lot of rhythm but he is also very natural and very relaxed," she says.

"Younger people who come into the store don't seem to mind taking advice from a sixtyish-year-old woman."

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Mrs Gibson says the youngest student they have tutored is five, but it all depends on how tall children are to reach the pedal of the bass drum.

The eldest student the school taught was a 65-year-old woman who "played for her own enjoyment".

As a surprise, the woman's husband bought her a drum kit as a graduation gift.

Mrs Gibson's father, Frank Gibson, established Drum City in 1976.

Chamber of Commerce chief executive and award judge Michael Barnett says Drum City's 34-year history in the hands of three generations of the same family proves that inspirational customer service creates loyalty.

"Mrs Gibson's win demonstrates that successful people in business don't discriminate because of the value of what someone might need.

"Customers' and clients' hearts are really won when someone goes out of their way over the little things."

To make an online nomination go to [www.awesomeservice.co.nz](http://www.awesomeservice.co.nz).

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