



**T**he story of the "little landscaping company that grew", isn't so unique. What makes this story different is that, from the top down, the entire enterprise is run by psychiatric survivors.....Until the last decade, this was a community that in many sectors, was largely thought to be unemployable. Many post-hospital "consumer-survivors" languished on family benefits, losing jobs, homes and self respect along the way. It's a situation that spirals into something mental health activists have called the "poverty of the soul". That is, until the Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses (OCAB) was formed in 1993 as an umbrella organization to oversee the development and sustainability of several consumer-survivors run enterprises that include The Raging Spoon and Out of This World cafes....It's incredible to see the change in mindset that occurs in workers.

The Toronto Sun, September 8, 2004: 12

## Events in the History of Green Thumb

### January - March, 2001

PERC held technical consultations with David Reville to develop a business plan.

### May to October 2001

A contract was signed with the Parkdale Business Improvement Association to maintain plants in the Parkdale area. Green Thumb employed 24 part-time staff.

### July 2001

A Strategic Plan was developed for the new Alternative Business.

### November 2001

25 members of PERC/Green Thumb attended the First Annual Appreciation Dinner and Awards Ceremony.

### November and December 2001

Green Thumb employees strung outdoor tree-lights along Queen Street for the Parkdale BIA.

### December 2001

Green Thumb hosted consumer/survivors from northern Ontario and Simcoe County, who came to Toronto to learn about Alternative Businesses.

### January 31, 2002

Green Thumb employees made presentations to funders from United Way, the City of Toronto, ODSP Employment Supports and HRDC about their business and the impact it had had on their lives.