

Church converts pins to prayers

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

From strikes to sermons, a former North Ridge bowling alley has been converted into a church.

Since July, work has been underway to renovate the Thunderbowl facility on County Road 34 into a centre for the Antioch Christian Ministries.

Services that were formerly held at the Woodslee Prayer Community Church have been moved to the new location, which held its first public service Feb. 4.

Pastor Gerrie Armaly said the church's congregation of about 200 people has outgrown the Woodslee building, and members of the

parish looked into purchasing a number of new locations in the area before deciding on the bowling alley.

Donations from the congregation totaling about \$200,000 helped the church with renovation costs.

Offerings of TVs and other leisure equipment were also provided by churchgoers to furnish a youth centre, expected to open March 15 for an annual conference for young Christians.

In July, much of the equipment from the bowling alley was taken out of the facility and put to the side of the road, free to passing motorists.

Some remnants, such as some wood from the building, was reused to build a music stage for the church.

Armaly said other "huge" renovations include the construction of a banquet hall, offices and a nursery where parents can drop off their children while they attend church services.

The youth centre will include a workout room, coffee bar and recreation area where youngsters will be able to drop in and play billiards, ping pong or air hockey.

"Our young adults, aged 30 and under, are a great portion of our focus," Armaly said.

Her son Jay, a junior pas-

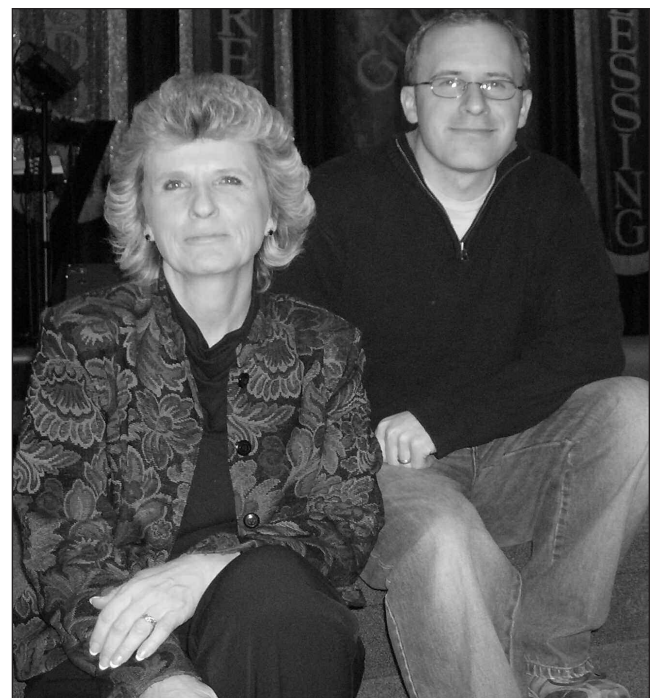
tor, will be leading activities at the youth centre.

"Fellowship is important," Jay said. "We wanted to give kids a place to come and sit down and connect with each other."

The new facility will be working in partnership with another Antioch centre: the Lazarus Commission in Windsor.

Armaly said Antioch Ministries has been officially recognized as a church for 15 years, and its congregations are growing.

"We're very pleased with this location," she said, adding that it'll be about a year until construction on the facility is entirely complete.



Pastor Gerrie Armaly and her son Jay pose in the sanctuary of the newly renovated Antioch Christian Ministries on County Road 34 in North Ridge. Since July, the church's staff and congregation have been working together to convert a bowling alley into a church, youth centre and banquet hall.

MedQuest program taking student applicants

Guidance counsellors at Essex County high schools are being encouraged to promote the MedQuest experience to their students.

Canada is facing a critical shortage of physicians. In Southwestern Ontario, nowhere is this shortage more critical than in Essex County. Efforts to address this problem will need to look at short, mid, and long-term

strategies to create a lasting and meaningful solution.

Students from rural or regional backgrounds are more likely to return to practise in their hometowns. However, students from the major urban centre in Ontario (Greater Toronto Area) apply almost three times more frequently than their counterparts in smaller regional centres.

The Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry's Southwestern Ontario Medical Education Network has developed MedQuest, a strategic collaborative program that encourages students from Southwestern Ontario, an area with a substantial rural population, to apply in greater numbers to medical school.

MedQuest is a one-week

summer program for students currently in Grade 10 and 11 that will have local physicians, nurses and medical/nursing students delivering an exciting and interactive medical based curriculum to encourage students to continue their studies in the field of medicine. Students will be nominated by their schools based on their academic abilities, leadership qualities, and interest in the field of medicine.

MedQuest is designed to provide students with realistic experiences in the field of medicine using state-of-the-art advanced simulator training, peer workshops, and the opportunity to watch physicians/nurses in a clinical setting.

Early exposure to the practice of medicine can help influence students' career plans and ultimately increase the chance of successfully entering medical school.

The Physician Recruitment and Retention

Committee is once again sponsoring MedQuest in Leamington from July 16-20. Thirty students from high schools in Leamington, Kingsville, Essex and Lakeshore will be eligible for consideration.

Applications must be submitted by March 9.


For further information on local participation contact Anne Miskovsky at 519-326-5761. For information on MedQuest procedures contact Kathy Van Dinther at 1-877-237-9676.

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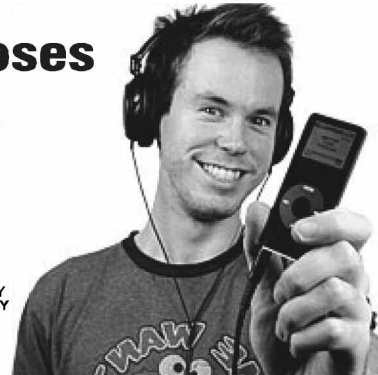
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