

# SUN-TRIBUNE PEOPLE

Principal Arlene Smith celebrates the opening of the new Stouffville District Secondary in September. The principal of SDSS for four years, she says the school's culture has changed. That includes provincial test results and student activities.



STAFF FILE PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

## New image alive in new school

BY ALYSHIA HIGGINS

All the hard work is paying off for principal Arlene Smith. The head of the ever-evolving Stouffville District Secondary School said she has found her "dream job".

The avid cyclist came to the school four years ago and since then, has been working towards changing the image of the school and improving student success.

A principal for two years prior to her arrival, she hoped to bring about positive change with the help of students, faculty and the community. If you ask her, the school and its partners are well on their way to achieving those goals.

Previous to coming to Stouffville, Ms Smith was the head principal for special education with the York Region District School Board, but decided to chase her dream of opening a new school. So far, she said this is definitely the highlight of her career.

Besides working sometimes 10-hour days, she has a busy life outside of work that includes a growing family.

She has two sons, one of whom was recently married.

**Q: Why did you choose to come to Stouffville?**

**A:** I really wanted to be in a school that I thought had a lot of potential and I thought I could make a difference.

10 minutes with

**ARLENE SMITH**

Your meeting with  
Whitchurch-Stouffville  
newsmakers

**Q: Why did you choose a career in education?**

**A:** As a kid, I enjoyed playing school and I really had this desire to make a difference and I felt this was an area I could do it in.

**Q: What is the most frustrating part of your job?**

**A:** When we moved into this new building, I was so excited.

I tend to be an optimist and thought the building would be totally finished and everything would be in place.

What has been frustrating is waiting for things. It's getting done, but I wanted it done right away.

**Q: What is your favourite part of the new school?**

**A:** I love the library. The library really is the hub of the school.

**Q: What is the best part of your job?**

**A:** We really, as a community, have been able to change this school.

Our achievement levels (literacy and numeracy scores) have gone way up.

We're now above board and provincial averages.

The other piece that's been really exciting is student engagement (and interest) in activities.

**Q: What is your biggest accomplishment?**

**A:** Achieving those two goals. I do believe the image of the school has changed but it's not just the image.

It's what's happening in the school. The fact that our students are really doing well and they're engaged.

**Q: If you weren't a principal, what would you do?**

**A:** (Laughs) I'm passionate about cycling, so I think I might have thought about setting up a cycle touring company.

It certainly wouldn't give me this kind of fulfillment.

For more information on SDSS, go to [stouffvilledistrict.ss.yrdsb.edu.on.ca](http://stouffvilledistrict.ss.yrdsb.edu.on.ca)

### Whitchurch-Stouffville News Digest

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#### Gormley gas bar robbed

Four men are wanted by York Regional Police after a gunpoint gas bar robbery in Gormley Sunday morning.

At about 4:20 a.m., a vehicle pulled into the Sunoco station at 2210 Stouffville Rd. and a man got out to fill it with gas.

The man walked into the station and was joined by three other men. One, who was carrying a handgun, demanded cash from the clerk, police said.

After grabbing cigarettes and money, the men jumped back into the vehicle.

The clerk was not hurt.

The vehicle, which had been stolen in Toronto, was dumped a short distance from the Sunoco.

All of the robbers are described as male, Caucasian, between 20 and 30 years old, standing five-foot, five-inches tall.

Three men were wearing black baseball caps with a silver sticker on the brims and black gloves, the other was wearing a tuque.

All were wearing black winter jackets and hoodies. The man with the gun also wore black and white running shoes and jeans.

If you have information, call police at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 6630, Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS or leave a tip at [www.1800222tips.com](http://www.1800222tips.com)

#### Tree pickup is Jan. 14

Christmas trees will be picked up Jan. 14, starting at 7 a.m.

You can enjoy your Christmas tree knowing it will be turned into reusable mulch after you put it on the curb for pickup.

Remove all decorations and as much tinsel as possible before putting the tree out.

For information, call Turtle Island Recycling at 1-866-421-5625.

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