

Seminar On Suicide

Near tragedy shocks teens

By Jim Thomas
STOUFFVILLE — There are several subjects young people would rather not discuss—even think about.

Teenage suicide is one. Like death itself, it's "out of sight and out of mind". However, the reality of self-inflicted death hit home, Thursday night, during a panel discussion at the Stouffville Pentecostal Church.

Those teens who hadn't heard the story, and even those who had, sat in stunned silence, as facts pertaining to this real-life drama unfolded before their ears.

Participants on the panel included—Bill Watts, operator of a suicide "hot line" in Toronto; Susan Powell, a Stouffville area mother of four and Durham Regional Police Constable Ralph Mills.

The one panelist, introduced by moderator Dan Statham as a "victim" of suicide, told of the "painful memories" related to her past. She recalled how many of her closest high school friends had met tragic deaths in automobile accidents and how this bothered her terribly. She remembered visiting several physicians whose only solutions were "pat answers", and drug prescriptions including valium.

She recalled seeking help through "church-shopping", but this failed also. As a last resort, she tried drowning her sorrows with alcohol, then attempted to take her own life.

It was a neighbor who found her, unconscious on the ground in the backyard of her home. Rushed to hospital, she was revived, treated and later released.

"I didn't want to live," she said. "I was angry that my life was saved".

The fact that her life was saved plus the revelations that have followed, have proved an inspiration and benefit to others.

The speaker credited a T.V. evangelist by the name of Jimmy Swaggert with "turning things around". She described the experience as "instant deliverance". "It's been beautiful ever since," she concluded, "Jesus is the answer".

Constable Mills reported 147 attempted suicides in Durham Region last year. Out of this number, 33 died.

The officer pointed to failure in school as a traumatic experience for most teens and often the reason behind suicide attempts.

"For some, it's the end of the line," he said. "The constable placed much of the responsibility on the shoulders of parents. "Christianity begins at home," he stated, "unfortunately, many parents are turning away from God and our nation is suffering".

He noted the lack of respect by a cross-section of young people for their parents, the police and the clergy. He described punk rock music as creating "absolute destruction and chaos".

"If Jesus is absent from the family; then the purpose for living is missing," said panelist Bill Watts. He said many teens look elsewhere for help because their parents refuse to listen. "Often," he stated, "it takes a tragedy before we open our eyes". He noted that when a suicide occurs, the parents are just as much the victims as a son or daughter.

The series, every Thursday evening for three weeks, continues May 5, (tomorrow), at 7:30 p.m., in the Stouffville Pentecostal Church.



Displays artistic talents

Members of the Silver Jubilee Club Art Group held their show and sale, Wednesday, an event that was well attended. One of the participants whose talents attracted much attention was Hector Worsfold of Lemonville. This painting of an English country garden was admired by many. Other participants included—Monica Briggs, Irene Slack, Eleanor Crossen, Bessie Pegg, Mary Bowden, Joy Byer, Winifred Mathews, Alma Johnson and Mary Carey. For some members, painting was a new experience. All have progressed steadily, however, until now, their works hang in many Stouffville homes. Most say their greatest satisfaction comes in seeing what they can accomplish. For visitors, Wednesday, those accomplishments bordered on the professional.

---Jim Thomas

Injured

WHITCHURCH — Five young people were injured, April 16, in a single-vehicle accident on the 7th Conc. of Whitchurch-Stouffville, north of the Bloomington Road.

Police said a Honda Civic, driven by Peter Gray, 16, of Agincourt, went out of control as it came over the brow of a hill and rolled into the east ditch.

Gray was admitted to York County Hospital, Newmarket along with four passengers. Stephen Bellerby, 16, of R.R. 4, Stouffville; David Weaver, 16, of Agincourt; Leslie Pardo, 17, of Toronto and James Hunter, 17, of Scarborough. No charges were laid.

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PASCAL
CORRECTION To This Weeks FLYER

On page 3, of this week's flyer, 13" Round Bedroom Fixture illustration is incorrect.
On page 5, 18 pc. Socket Set should have read 17 pc. Socket Set.
On page 8, One Coat Wood Preservative Stain, should have read, Save \$5.00.
We regret any inconvenience this may have caused.

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