

Streetproofing children

Summitview principal okays safeguard plan

STOUFFVILLE — Child safety is the concern of Laura Barnes of Queensville and Linda Laughlin of Markham.

On Friday, they shared these concerns with other mothers at a Parent-Principal Meeting in Summitview School.

Mrs. Barnes stressed the fact that one in every three girls and one in every five boys will be sexually assaulted by age eighteen.

These statistics, alarming in magnitude, have prompted the women to take their Streetproofing Program before the York Region Board of Education.

Mrs. Barnes said it's not the program's intent to strike fear into the minds of children but rather to make them aware.

"However, better to be afraid than sorry," she cautioned.

Both Mrs. Barnes and Mrs. Laughlin requested parental assistance in presenting the program in schools. They hope to establish an association satellite branch that will include Markham, Unionville and Whitechurch-Stouffville.

Instruction is provided through use of puppets and other visual aids, Mrs. Barnes explained. Primary children, she said, find the puppets so intriguing, they don't notice adults working behind the scenes.

Summitview Principal Lorne Boardway strongly supported the program. He said it could be incorporated into the school's Health and Hygiene Course. He

plans to discuss it with members of staff and keep parents informed through newsletters. He said he hopes to have the program in place by the start of the fall term.

Response by parents was also positive.

Information sheets handed out at the meeting pointed to the following misconceptions and facts:

Misconception—The victim of assault is usually a teenage girl.

Fact—The victim is often a young child between four and eleven years old, although boys and girls of any age are vulnerable. Twenty-two per cent are under six.

Misconception—The offender is a stranger to the child.

Fact—In 85 per cent of all cases, the offender is someone known to the child—a parent, a relative, an older friend or neighbor.

Misconception—The assault takes the form of a violent attack, leaving the child with physical injuries.

Fact—The assault is usually non-violent. The child is engaged by persuasion, threats and bribes, rather than physical force.

Misconception—Child sexual assault usually occurs as a single, isolated incident.

Fact—In 88% of reported cases, the child is subjected repeatedly to sexual assault. Because the child is persuaded to keep the activity a secret, it may continue undetected over a number of years. Recurrent assault is more

damaging than a single, isolated incident.

Misconception—The assault takes place in isolated places such as woods, parks and playgrounds.

Fact—The assault frequently occurs in the child's familiar surroundings, often in his or her own home or in the home of a relative or friend.

Misconception—Children make up stories about sexual assault to get themselves out of trouble.

Fact—There is no evidence that children have ever lied about sexual assault. A child will lie to get out of trouble, not to get into it.

Both Mrs. Barnes and Mrs. Laughlin said school involvement in the program is important because, other than parents, teachers are often the most significant adult in a child's life. Children, they said, are likely to report occurrences of child abuse to teachers, school counselors or school nurses. Also, they said, teachers or school support staff are likely to notice victims via changes in their behavior that may occur as a result of abuse.

"Let's give our children the skills to be aware of what's going on," Mrs. Barnes said. She likened the program to an insurance policy.

The main purpose is prevention," she concluded.

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'Heads & Tales'

The children loved it

By BRENDA LITTLE

STOUFFVILLE — The Stouffville Players gave the town a good dose of imagination last weekend.

Their double-production of Heads and Tales was a big hit with the local children.

The play, their first production of the year, revolved around a character named T.J. and his lack of imagination.

It was the task of the rest of the cast and the purpose of the play to teach T.J. to be more imaginative.

The entire cast gave solid performances as they moved from lesson to lesson in their education of T.J.

The audience seemed to get the biggest kick out of Roger Glazin who played the absent-minded professor living in the world of T.J.'s imagination.

Latham Hall filled with laughter as Roger led his young cast in an exercise warm-up to the tune of Boy George's "I'll Tumble For You."

The laughter picked up again later on in the play when Jason Brock, playing Frederick, one of the professor's assistants, was turned into a frog. As Jason leaped across the stage croaking, the children in the audience screamed with delight.

The audience participation segments of the play were also a favorite with the children. As the actors were teaching T.J. to be more creative by using pantomime, they baked imaginary cakes and took them into the audience offering the children pieces. They then asked the children to yell out what flavor they had.

By the end of the play, after his warm-up exercises, vocal and pantomime lessons, T.J. was given his final examination.

When he successfully completed his task of finishing a story started by the professor, he was able to set his imagination free.

During this scene, Linda Hachey, 16, playing Sophia, T.J.'s imagination, gave a fantastic performance. She exerted her freedom by dancing gracefully across the stage.

Jennifer Kidd, playing Maria, the professor's other assistant, also gave a solid performance. She made the entire audience chuckle when she pretended to be a bag of fortune being fed by Frederick. Each time the spoon was put to her mouth she belched loudly.

Director Brent Macleod was pleased with the attendance.

"The turn-out was better than I thought it might be," he said.

Both Saturday and Sunday we had good audiences (about 80 people).

Brent, in his debut as a director, did a remarkable job with the cast despite his preliminary doubts.

"I thought I'd have a problem dealing with the kids, but there was no problem at all," he said. "I'm really proud of them."

The Stouffville Players next performance will be April 11 at 8 p.m. in Latham Hall.

Editor's Mail

Postal worker criticizes critic

Dear Jim:

I have never felt compelled to write a letter to a newspaper in my life. However, after reading a letter from Sig Kusatz in the Jan. 22 Tribune, I was angered and felt I must reply.

Mr Kusatz made reference to Canada Post's already slow service and stated that the new box operation will add a day to delivery time.

I cannot argue with this because I think he's right. The service IS slow. People getting mail in the present green boxes now, are getting "yesterday's" mail, compared to lock-box holders who are getting "today's" mail. So, the implementation of new boxes won't change the fact that lock-box holders will get their mail one day earlier than those using community mail boxes.

Yes, one day will be added to an already slow service.

Mr. Kusatz then wrote: "If the persons delivering the mail to the

boxes move at the speed at which they move inside the post office, they'll be a traffic hazard as well."

I wish Mr Kusatz would have specified who THEY are. It was that statement that angered me.

I believe I give an honest day's work as anyone in the work force and I take pride in this fact.

It's difficult to please everyone in a small town, but I do try my best and go out of my way to please people.

Anyone who knows me well enough; will attest to what I am saying. When I receive my pay cheque, my hand doesn't shake at all.

I could say to Mr Kusatz that ALL chartered accountants are crooks. But, of course, I wouldn't, not in a local newspaper.

Sincerely,
Dave Glover,
Inside Postal Worker,
Stouffville Postal Station

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