

# Network to place students in jobs

**By ROBERT DONNELLY**  
For several years, York Region has boasted one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. The most recent StatsCan census revealed that the area's unemployment rate was an enviable 3.5 per cent.

Yet considering the problem of chronic youth unemployment — especially for teenagers 15-19 — these impressive figures belie the fact that last year there were more than 25,000 youths unemployed in Metro and York Region alone.

However, through the help of a private job creation initiative and existing government agencies, this year portends to be one of the best ever for the 75,000 young people looking for summer jobs.

The panacea or cure-all is called Youth Network. The organization aspires to generate more than 10,000 additional jobs in York Region by canvassing more than 15,000 area businesses.

Prospective employers are contacted by telephone and then given an intense sales pitch. "We ask them to recall the time when they were given their first summer job," commented spokesperson Susan Reese.

Those businesses that cannot afford to pledge a job are asked to contribute a donation to Youth Network which is entirely sponsored through private funds.

Corporations, led this year by Magna International Inc. (a local automotive parts manufacturer), are also involved in coordinating the 90-day drive and supplying staff and equipment to what will become an annual promotion.

Each year, a different company will be selected to coordinate the effort.

The idea of a private sector initiative to create youth employment originated five years ago in New York City. In its debut year, more than 15,000 youths were given summer jobs that they otherwise may not have had.

Last summer, a one-day 12 hour job blitz along similar lines was held in North Bay that resulted in an additional 116 jobs for local students, foreshadowing the prospect of success for a larger and more intensive effort.

Organizers point out that since the Youth Network drive began on Friday, May 15, more than 1,000 businesses have been contacted in York Region producing 808 job pledges to date.



## Rotary Club raises \$2,000

Paul de Savoye, president of the Markham Rotary Club, presents a cheque for \$2,000 to Anne Pahl, Participation House administrator, while resident Paul Meyers looks on. The money will go towards

Participation House's new roof fund. So far, the fund is up to \$38,000. \$60,000 is needed.

— Sjoerd Witteveen

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