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NEWS ITEM: Housing needs survey overlooks young homebuyers



Housing survey not on the mark

A tip of the hat to Whitchurch-Stouffville Town Council for seeing the holes in a so-called housing needs survey being planned by a consultant.

The survey, designed to get a good idea of what housing is needed in Whitchurch-Stouffville, wouldn't have done much for the largest group of those who are currently shut out of the housing market: first-time home buyers.

And though the Starr Group promised a second questionnaire aimed at that group, housing prices today continue to rise, pushing the magic number for many potential home buyers out of reach.

The aim of the study is honorable, but it will take more than a survey to solve today's current housing crisis. Meanwhile, a bigger and bigger portion of the community is forced to find suitable housing further afield.

But armed with the survey results, Whitchurch-Stouffville will have the means to form a blueprint for the future of its affordable housing policies.

That's a step in the right direction for all concerned.

New hospital philosophy is friendliness

When I was growing up in England, hospitals fell into two main categories: the large institutions, which were often used to teach aspiring doctors, and the small, local cottage hospitals.

The big hospitals tended to be impersonal and unwelcoming and were often housed in buildings which looked like relics from a Dickensian nightmare.

They were run to suit the administration, not the patients, and the only thing that could be said in their favor was that people tried extremely hard to get better so they could leave as soon as possible.

Cottage hospitals were small and friendly. What they lacked in funds and equipment, they made



kate's corner

kate gilderdale

up for in personal care and attention.

My father, who was ill with cancer for two years before he died, was often a patient at our local cottage hospital, and the care and emotional support we all received made the last months of his life not only bearable but surprisingly happy.

What's remarkable about the

new Markham-Stouffville Hospital is that it promises to combine all the efficiency and high technology of a much larger facility with the compassion and personal approach of a true community hospital.

Everyone involved has the same philosophy: to provide patient-centre care in a relaxed, non-threatening and friendly atmosphere.

It's hard not to feel positive about the place from the minute you walk in. The large, spacious

entrance area is filled with light, the wards and private rooms are decorated in restful, non-institutional colors, and the patient lounge areas are as welcoming as your own living room.

Ten years ago when I had my second child, I made the tactical mistake of going into labor at a busy time. The only attention I got was from an irritable nurse who swore it was impossible to get a needle into one of my uncooperative veins.

When they moved me into the delivery room, my husband was told to stay outside because staff had failed to call my doctor in time, and the rules said no fathers were allowed in until he arrived.

I eventually had my baby surrounded by strangers and without the comfort of my husband, who had attended prenatal classes specifically to help me through the birth.

We had been told our small son would be allowed to visit only if

we made an appointment in advance, but by the time he was due to come in my daughter had developed jaundice, and hospital policy prevented us from seeing each other at all during my five-day stay.

He wasn't even allowed on the maternity floor the day my husband came to pick my daughter and myself up.

At Markham-Stouffville, labor and delivery take place in one spacious birthing unit. A mother is encouraged to have relatives with her, including her children if she so chooses, because here they treat children as people.

Visiting hours for all patients are extremely liberal, and visitors are encouraged to help out with patient care wherever possible.

In an age of high-tech, in which people's emotional needs are increasingly overlooked, Markham-Stouffville Hospital is a much-needed and most welcome breath of fresh air.

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Fire department fast and efficient

Dear Editor,
Fortunately, I have never had occasion to call any fire department until recently when a fire erupted in my chimney from a small wood-burning stove.

The immediate response and efficient performance of the Stouffville Volunteer Fire Department has assured this homeowner that Stouffville has a fire department it can be proud of.

Thanks again, guys.
Shirley Middleton
Bayberry Street
Stouffville

Editor's mail

Stouffville is responsive

Dear Editor,
We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your assistance in recruiting volunteers to help with a number of service programs in the community.

Stouffville residents have been responding generously to the many ongoing needs for the time and talents.

We can assure you that the organizations mentioned in your newspaper are most grateful for your co-operation.

We will continue to submit items on a regular basis and look forward to your continued support.

Joan Wood
Anne Lanning
Co-ordinators
Volunteer Bureau Markham