

stouffville comment

Today's youth need more options

What are the youth of today doing?

For some, nothing. And in that lies a serious problem. If youth in the area have nothing to do with their free time, or rather, perceive that they have nothing to do, they will resort to making their own fun.

And in a group situation, that can be disastrous as even the most innocent of youngsters succumbs to peer pressure.

There are things for young people to do in our community, but unfortunately, they are not what teens want to do.

Communities must re-examine the programs we are offering youths, and focus on not what we think they should be doing, but rather, on trying to find a middle ground where the young people actually find something of interest for them.

A supervised teen drop-in centre has worked well in some communities.

Perhaps its time we examined an option like that here.



There's nothing common about this cold

I am sick. Not your average, groggy, sniffly common cold sick, but really and truly ill.

I would love to get my hands on the wonderful person who graciously offered my body this free ride into Hell, for as I write this, I am dulled to the point of incomprehensibility.

"I need a drink of water," becomes "Gi beed da dink ob wabber."

My sinuses have become a sanctuary for all things nasty, and every morning for the past five days, this flood of germ refugees makes a mass exodus, running off the brink of my nose like a goopy herd of lemmings.

Every second word I have uttered is accompanied by a hideous "gsssnick" as I repel the nasal forces bent on causing me tremendous embarrassment

as I attempt to deal with the public.

But, as I said, this is no ordinary cold. It has me firmly in its grip, and seems to relish the pain and facial contortions I must endure as I swallow a full tablespoon of Buckley's Mixture with a honey chaser.

There have been moments when I would like to rip my face off at the crown of my hair, all the way down to the nape of my neck.

I understand there is a lot of this going around, but surely no one can be suffering as much as I. This past week has been a round trip through Dante's Inferno, and unfortunately, it struck during one of those weeks when I simply could not take time off to recover.

And like most men, I am not one who immediately trundles off to the

MINUTE WITH MAIR



andrew mair

doctor. The male ego clicks in when I'm sick and I swear the whole mess will blow over (quite literally) by the next day.

As well, I'm not mad-keen on

medication and as a result, rely on my immune system to beat the tar out of the illness.

Well, not this time. It's been five days, and there's no ship of relief in

sight. This flu bug, or whatever it is, is an ocean washing over me, and I think I'm sinking fast.

Here's what you can do to help. It may be too late for me, but others can still avoid the same fate.

If you have a home remedy for curing the spring flu, let us know. It can be as outrageous as a travelling medicine show recipe, or as simple as grandma's hot toddy mix. We'll print the cures in upcoming editions of *The Tribune*. Drop us your remedy at our office.

"Anbd hab ba dice day."

Children should be seen, and heard

As the principle of universal daycare gains increasing credibility, isn't it ironic that the time children most need guidance and support is just when society deems them capable of fending for themselves?

Few toddlers or pre-schoolers participate in deliberate acts of violence or destruction, but a growing number of kids between 10 and 17 are involved in everything from vandalism to drug abuse. Yet from 12 onwards, they're considered mature enough to be home alone after school for long periods of time and to ignore the temptations of unfettered freedom.

"I don't know about you but, given the opportunity at 12 or 13, I would not have had my head buried in my homework if someone had suggested goofing off. It's simply unrealistic to expect kids to be models of good behavior when there's no one around to keep tabs on them.

When we moved here and started a family, I had the naive idea that life would be simpler and that my

KATE'S CORNER



kate gilderdale

children wouldn't be exposed to the unpleasant realities of city life. Comparing notes with friends in Toronto 12 years later, it seems things are no worse there than they are here.

A few years ago I was shaken by the language in the schoolyard. Now I'm staggered at the attitude of children who swear at their teachers, smoke openly on school property and refuse to comply with basic school rules, sometimes with the active support of their parents.

Do these parents really believe this behavior is acceptable, are they scared of their own children, or have they just given up? Are they even aware of where their kids are and what they're doing after school? Figures show it's not a

question of poverty either, many of those who get into trouble are kids from well-off families who get their kicks from anti-social behavior.

It's a sad fact that many parents have no choice but to leave their children on their own. Isn't it time the lobbyists, who are so vociferous in demanding daycare, became equally vocal on the subject of society's apparent indifference to the emotional well-being of older children?

With computer terminals, faxes, phone modems and answering machines, there's an increasing opportunity for companies to employ individuals to work in their homes. It's an attractive alternative; employers would have fewer overheads, absenteeism as a result of childhood illness would be reduced, and parents could be more involved in their children's daily lives.

Employers and governments have to become more responsive to the needs of families. It's up to us, as voters, to make sure they follow through.

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