

Music Mania raises \$3,000

This year's Music Mania performance raised nearly \$3,000 for local charity projects, organizers report this week. The four-day sell-out show, which ran Thurs., April 22 to Sat., April 24, carried the Be Our Guest theme, complete with animated characters, chorus, dance and skit routines.

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Welfare woes

York taxpayers pay \$3 million to 10,000

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

York Region taxpayers have already paid out nearly \$3 million in welfare cheques this year - and the numbers are rising at a rapid pace.

Nearly 10,000 unemployed citizens throughout the region collected welfare in March, according to the latest figures from York's community services department. York's welfare rolls appeared to be

levelling off since last December, but March figures show a 350-case load jump from February, or a 19 per cent jump.

Of the 9,790 York residents cashing welfare cheques each month, 5,632 are classified as employable, while about 3,500 are considered to be unable to work, the March report shows.

York's community service's commissioner Peter Crichton said unemployed residents who have been out of the

workforce for more than 12 months will likely take longer to get a job now that recessionary times are easing up.

That means welfare figures are not likely to drop during the next few months, he said.

The region reports that 3.2 per cent of its 503,000 residents are currently receiving social assistance payments - the highest ratio in York's history, reports show. The number one reason

people give for needing social assistance in an inability to obtain regular employment, followed by single parent, and temporary illness, reports show.

The provincial government pays 80 per cent of the region's welfare tab - totalling just more than \$20 million this year. Queen's Park is hoping to swap welfare responsibility for road maintenance responsibility through its disentanglement proposal.



Mother's Day swing

Volunteers enjoy spending time with the little Stouffville Mammoth Park on Sunday. The children enjoyed the swings and the day's activities.

Stouffville teenager lobbies support for beach volleyball; business wants same

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

A Whitchurch-Stouffville teenager is asking the town to contribute a one-time grant of \$2,000 to start a public beach volleyball club.

Tim Lavell wants the town to back his "exciting new program" idea of building "non-competitive" family beach volleyball courts on the recreation complex grounds for seasonal use.

Lavell, who has been working closely with recreation programmer Peter Arnott in formulating the idea, has already gained widespread youth support and presented officials with a 64-name petition of youth who would join the club.

Lavell wants the town to back development of a \$3,500, two-court facility which would be operated by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Beach Volleyball Club through a \$675 membership drive and a \$825 start-up fundraising campaign.

The town's \$2,000 contribution would pay for construction costs such as excavation, concrete, poles, nets, balls and a storage box, Lavell said.

But a representative for Chariot's Restaurant, expected to be opened this summer at the old Deer Park Inn site, also wants to build beach volleyball courts.

Debbie Bradford told officials her company was willing to construct two courts near the restaurant - a private sector undertaking at no cost to the town.

But Lavell said the location was not convenient for most youths in the area and would turn into a "promotion gimmick" for the restaurant instead of a fun, family event.

"I want this program to be youth accessible where everyone can come and enjoy it. It's no good if people have to wait in line and can only play if they can afford to go. It should be a free thing - I'm trying to promote togetherness with this," Lavell told officials.

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Deficient diamonds need \$18,000 facelift

Local politicians saw a long list of ball diamond deficiencies last week that will cost about \$18,000 to repair.

There are four diamonds, however, that are considered top priority, requiring major

repairs in order that games can be played on them this summer.

Parks and recreation superintendent John Crawley told officials the local minor ball leagues have grown by 101 par-

ticipants from last year and "the need for additional facilities will continue."

Crawley, who is working with community ball association chair, Mary Myers, said

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