

# Students, business link up thanks to program

**KATE GILDERDALE**  
Correspondent

Gay Eastman, who teaches the entrepreneurial class at Stouffville District Secondary School, believes in practising what she preaches.

Eastman is currently involved in a joint venture called Student Network, which links students who are seeking employment with local businesses

through a computer database. "It all started when I invited Ken (Pipher, of Gristmill Marketing) to talk to the class and he came up with this great idea," she said.

"We're a marketing company with database expertise," explained Pipher, who suggested that employment opportunities could be maximized if student résumés were fed into a computer so that they could be matched as

closely as possible with the needs of local employers.

In her usual entrepreneurial fashion, Eastman grabbed the idea and ran with it, working with Pipher to create a flyer which will be sent to 500 area businesses towards the end of April. She enlisted the support of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce and requested sponsorships from local companies.

"I went to some of the heavy hitters in town and they really liked the idea," said Eastman. Participating sponsors are Choko Motorsports, Bouwmeister Landscaping, CIBC, Gristmill Marketing, Van Dyke's Tree and Landscape Care, Stouffville Chrysler and Schleese Saddlery Service.

Businesses who register with the program are supplied with a pre-qualified list of potential employees for summer, part-time or full-time employment, without cost or obligation. "We've almost formed a head hunting organization for high school kids," observed Pipher, who has hired students from SDSS in the past and was impressed with their skills and enthusiasm.

"The world is changing so quickly and the kids bring with them a whole new set of skills, especially in the area of computers and the Internet. They also bring fresh ideas, which can be really useful to all kinds of businesses."

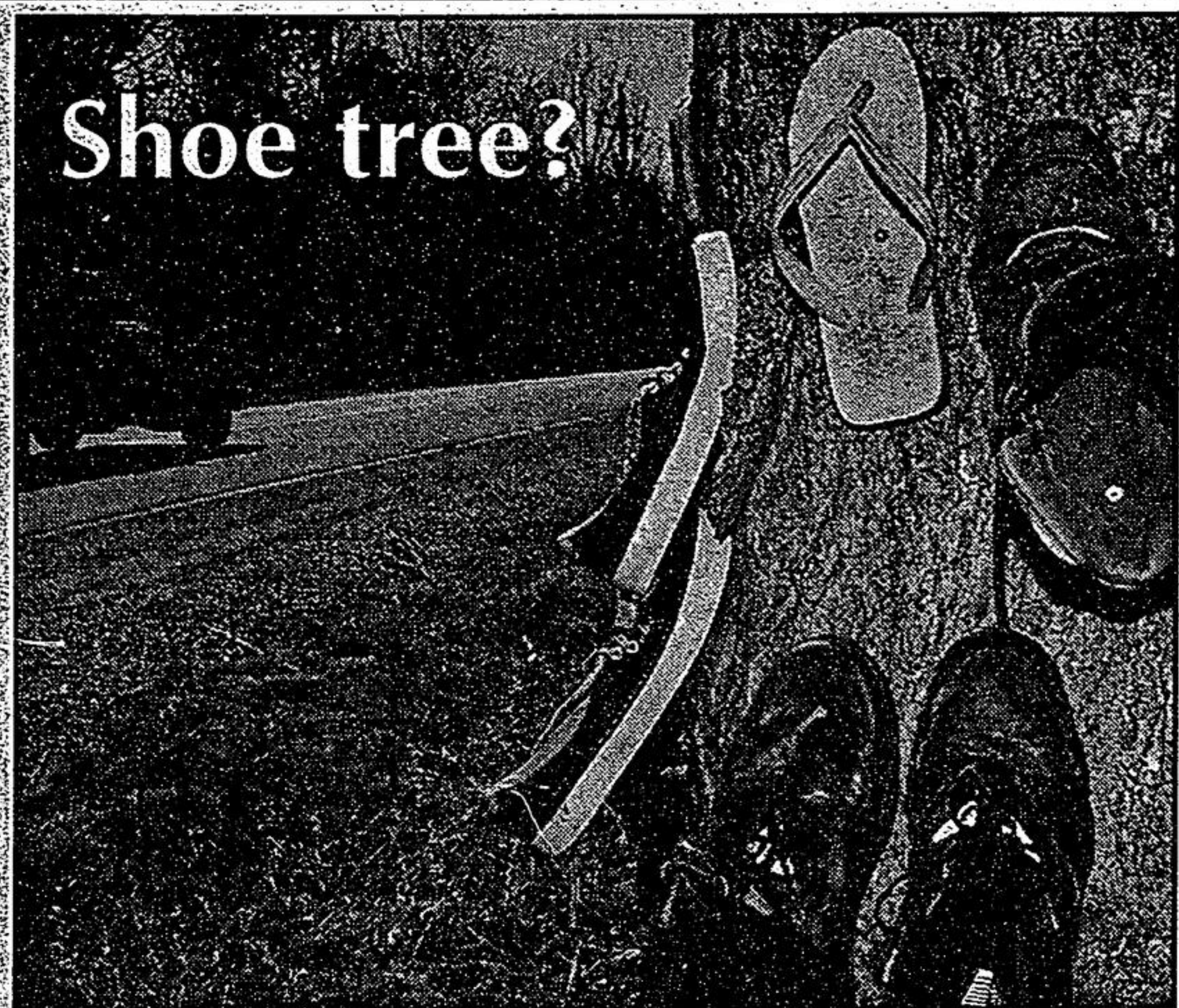
"What I'm saying to the community, through the Chamber of Commerce, is if you want to hire a summer student this year, we're going to match your needs with the student's capabilities,"

said Eastman. Students benefit by gaining practical experience, with the potential for obtaining part-time employment or, in some cases, a full time career. The database contains detailed information which includes previous jobs, courses taken, hobbies and specific skills.

"When you register your business with its unique talent requirements, we will locate résumés of students who possess the skills that best match your requirements," she explained. "Their résumés will be mailed to you for your review and, if you decide, for follow-up."

Student Network has been endorsed by Mayor Wayne Emmerson and offers excellent opportunities for both employers and students. High school students living in the community who go to other schools are also welcome to apply said Eastman.

For more information call her at 640-1433.



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