

Gormley church offers help, prayers for Cober family

JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

A love offering will be taken at a Gormley church tomorrow honouring a three-year-old girl orphaned and seriously injured in an accident in Africa.

The congregation of Heise Hill-Brethren Christ Church was shocked to learn that a former pastor's granddaughter is the only survivor of a crash that killed his son, daughter-in-law and grandson.

Rev. Jim Cober was the pastor at the Gormley church from 1975 to 1981. Today, he's at his granddaughter's bedside at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

Sorina Cober is the lone survivor of a crash involving a car and a transport. Dead is Timothy Cober, 29, his wife Sandy, 30, and son Jake, 17 months. Timothy was raised in Gormley.

"We spent six wonderful years in Gormley," said Rev. Cober. "Our family made lots and lots of friends there. The people from Gormley have contacted us and they've been very very kind. We will always remember our time there."

Sorina spent 18 hours in the air before reaching Toronto on Tuesday. Her injuries include two broken arms and two broken legs. "She was operated on late last night (Thursday)," said Cober. "She has two arm casts and two leg casts, but she is expected to make a full recovery. She is very dear to us."

A trust fund has been set up by the Toron-

to Ambulance Services at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC). Sorina, born in Africa to her missionary parents, has no medical insurance.

When Sorina is well enough she'll go to New York where she's to be raised by her aunt and uncle.

The plight of the little girl has touched the hearts of people on two continents. None more so than here in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Tomorrow, special prayers will be offered for the little girl. Church member Anna Reesor said her thoughts along with the thoughts of the entire congregation are with their former pastor and his wife Doris.

Offering will be taken at the church to help offset the cost of Sorina's medical expenses. Those not attending the 11 a.m. church service are encouraged to make a donation at the CIBC on Stouffville's Main Street, said Reesor.

After leaving Gormley, the Cober family went to Kitchener. Timothy became a missionary. He and his wife worked with mentally disabled adults in Africa. In January, the couple and their two children moved to the Shashe Bible College in the African nation of Botswana.

In Botswana, more than \$15,000 has been raised to ship the bodies of Timothy, Sandy and Jake home to Canada for burial.

Dealing with such a tragedy is difficult, said Rev. Cober. "But God is in control. We may not understand it, but we put our faith in him," he added.



THE WINNER: Vinkie Lau, centre, is a winner in the 1996 Remembrance Day Poster Contest sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion. She placed second at National Level. The Stouffville branch presented Vinkie with an award, and on hand were Sue Sherban, youth education chairperson, left, and legion president John McCracken. Photo by LORI EMMERSON

Hospital checks its records

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procedures.

He said during that type of gallbladder surgery, using a keyhole incision, often the gallbladder is inflamed. That can mean the surgeon can tear the gallbladder, allowing a small amount of bile to leak out. The bile is quickly suctioned, the gallbladder is removed and the incident has no clinical significance to the patient.

"(The Star) took that code and said it represented bile duct injuries and that is total misrepresentation," he said. "It was a misinterpretation of the efficiency of our record keeping and our health records department."

MacLean has issued a press release and wants to ensure patients are aware the information is misleading. "Since 1991 our surgeons have conducted over 1,000 laparoscopic cholecystectomies. They are highly trained and skilled in this procedure which is reflected in the high quality medical care they provide to their patients," it states.

MacLean said two bile duct injuries occurred in 1996 and 1997. Both patients recovered.

MacLean said the hospital will do whatever it

takes to make sure the Star corrects the information. "We are considering any action to get to the end point - which is clarification from the Toronto Star. If that means we can do it without a lawsuit, we will. If it requires a lawsuit, then we'll do that," he said.

"We're upset because the information is wrong. It leaves the community thinking their hospital is somehow sub-standard when in reality it's very good. We're assuming other hospitals are having the same problem."

The Star article, one of a series, also gave Markham Stouffville low marks for continuing education, something MacLean said staff are still investigating.

"We wanted to deal with the issue of surgical complications right away," he said. "But everything (the Star) puts in is suspect now - if they misinterpret something as basic as data, which is very objective, then what did they do with the other things that are far more subjective?"

If you have concerns about these issues MacLean asks you to call your surgeon or the hospital's public relations department at 472-7095.

Youth Trails camp finds home in Stouffville

STELLA KARPOUZIS
Correspondent

A camp designed to make a lasting impression on the minds of inner-city kids has found its home in Stouffville.

Made to blend in with its surroundings, the Youth Trails Initiatives facility was founded with the intention of giving confidence and self-esteem to those children that need it the most.

The unassuming site occupies a piece of land in the Pangman Springs Conservation Area, located on Warden Ave. north of Aurora Rd.

The Trails program is for kids aged 12 to 15, from select schools in the Greater Toronto Area. It chooses its participants based on very specific criteria.

"We want kids that are in the middle," said Trails chair Jim Hayhurst Sr. "We choose the ones without security in their lives. Not bad kids, not good kids, but those with very little attention either way."

The groups are limited to about 20 children. Hayhurst explained that this way the children could receive more individual attention. "I'd rather have a big impact on a small group of kids, than a small impact on a large group," he said.

The kids chosen represent all nationalities, all creeds and both

sexes.

The facility is equipped with housing for both girls and boys, as well as for the staff. During their time there, they make use of an extensive outdoor playground, built into the wooded area around the camp and 50 kilometres of trails that wind throughout the grounds.

Trails is a four-year program and the children attend the site for two weeks in the summer and a weekend a month year-round. They are taught confrontational and life-planning skills and through role-playing, they also learn of the dangers of alcohol, sex, and drugs.

Some children that have already graduated from the program, continue their association with Trails through a leader-in-training program they created.

Before opening in Stouffville last week, Trails used to rent land near Kettleby. "The goal was always to find our own property," said Hayhurst, who felt the children should have something to call their own, something permanent.

The land in Stouffville was given to Trails as part of an agreement with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority that it would abide all conservation principles and pay the property taxes.

Since it currently acts as a charity,

Trails relies on donations. Sears Canada was its founding sponsor and the Bay Street Invitational Golf Tournament and Rotary Club of Eglinton have also donated generous sums over the years. However, Hayhurst hopes to make Trails self-sufficient by renting the Stouffville facility out during the weeks it is not in use.

Even though there's no cost to the children to enter the program, there is a heavy emphasis on community service. The five-year-old program has been involved with the clean-up of the Don River, tree planting programs, and building boardwalks on Bruce trails.

The kids have also taken an active hand in preparing the camp and have been chipping wood to spread under the camp's rope course.

The children aren't the only ones preparing the camp and Stouffville has benefited from the task of having to get the facility ready for use. Supplies were bought in Stouffville and both the water and septic systems were installed by local contractors.

"We've used as many local people as we can," said Hayhurst. He said he expects to maintain the facility with local services as well.

With the receipt of its occupancy permit yesterday, it won't be long before Trails leaves its mark on another group of young minds.



ON THE EDGE: Collin Calab and Tamara Williams join other children balancing on huge teeter-totter at the opening of the in the Trails program last week. Photo by LORI EMMERSON

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