

Stouffville woman's story offers hope

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Correspondent

In proclaiming November Incontinence Awareness Month, the Canadian Continence Foundation is seeking to provide education and offer hope for the estimated one in 20 Canadians affected by the condition.

Among them is Nancy Jeffrey, a Stouffville resident whose life was drastically altered after she underwent a laparoscopic hysterectomy in March, 1993.

"I experienced urinary complications from the surgery. I was unable to void and had no sense

when my bladder was full."

Despite doctors' assurances that such complications were common and that normal function would return, her problems continued and worsened over the next three years. After extensive testing and a variety of treatments, Jeffrey began suffering recurrent bladder infections and pelvic pain.

"My urologist told me my prognosis to my condition was hopeless and encouraged me to stop working because of my disability." By this time, she was close to despair but her husband, John, was not willing to give up and continued to seek answers.

His research led him to an Internet article by a Montreal physician, Dr. M. Hassouna, an expert on chronic bladder dysfunction. After the article was published, Hassouna moved to Toronto and now practises at the Toronto Hospital.

Jeffrey went to see him last June and he conducted tests to determine her suitability for an implant to alleviate her condition. As a result, she received a permanent implant in the summer of 1996, a procedure which has allowed her to resume a normal life.

"I have started a full-time job without any problems or compli-

cations," said Jeffrey. "My total well-being has changed dramatically and I now have a positive outlook on life. This operation was truly God's gift to me."

Her own experience led her to share her story in an effort to overcome other sufferers' reluctance to seek help for themselves. People with incontinence often withdraw from friends and family and try to hide the problem, rather than seek professional advice.

"There is a persistent myth that urinary incontinence is a normal consequence of aging," observed Dr. S. Herschorn, chief of urology at Sunnybrook Health Science

Centre. "The thing to remember is that incontinence should never be considered normal, and no one should ever have to resign themselves to a loss of dignity."

The mission of the Canadian Continence Foundation is "to enhance the quality of life of people experiencing incontinence, by helping them and/or their caregivers to confidently seek and access cures and treatment options, and by encouraging important research to advance incontinence treatment and/or management."

For further information, contact the foundation at 1-800-265-9575.

Show on at Latcham Hall

Get an early start on Christmas shopping at Cranberries and Popcorn, which takes place Saturday at Latcham Hall.

"Sandra Stronach and I have been running an annual craft show in town and this is our sixth year," said Julie Reesor, who is organizing the event with Stronach and Evelyn Brodie. The sale runs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there is a one dollar admission charge. "We always make a donation to the Christmas dinner at the Stouffville Country Market," Reesor explained. The show is attractively set-up and decorated and there is single cash checkout for all purchases, to make shopping more convenient for customers, she noted. Items range from personalized embroidered sleep wear to window art, with a host of great Christmas gift and decorating ideas.

"Our idea is to provide a really nice atmosphere with excellent quality. We'll have something for everyone," said Reesor.



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