

Parents' can cash in chits

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

It's almost time for parents of local school-age children to cash in their chits.

The province's new payback law means residents can claim up to \$40 in child-care costs for each day their younger children were out of school during the Ontario teachers' strike.

By filling out a form that will be available through local schools, a parent can ask for \$400.

That's except for York Region Catholic school supporters, who can't ask for more than \$200.

The exception was made in the law because the region's separate school teachers began a legal strike Nov. 3.

The board had argued this discriminates against its parents. Last week, chair Tina Molinari said she had asked Catholic school councils help convince MPPs to change the law.

On Friday, Labour Minister Jim Flaherty announced that payment forms were available and set a return deadline — Jan. 16.

The application form is easy to fill out and simple to submit, Flaherty said. "And, I expect that school boards will be prompt in making payments to eligible families," he added.

The forms had not yet reached local schools yesterday, although some par-

ents had already got one through the Internet or their local library.

"We haven't got them yet, but we're expecting them in today," said Bob Harper, a public board superintendent.

The separate board is asking its parents to wait for an amended form, one that reflects the board's unique situation.

There's no rush, said a board spokesperson: "By the end of January, everyone will have a cheque," she said.

EDUCATION

The Catholic board is inviting people to call 416-221-5050, ext. 7500 or 7040 to hear more.

Both boards are planning to send the forms home with students and collect them at schools for processing.

Only families with children who were under 13 or in special-needs programs when the provincial strike began on Oct. 27 can apply, and the form warns that it's a punishable offence to submit false information.

The Fairness for Parents and Employees Act also protects parents whose children prevented them from working during the strike. The law says these employees can't be fired or disciplined.

This second part of the act, however, doesn't apply to York Region Catholic parents for what happened after Nov. 3.



WAY TO GO BRIDON MOTORS: Gina Rosen, president of the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation and Jan Black, Development Officer for the hospital accept a cheque from Brian Ewens of Bridon Motors in Stouffville. The business has raised \$8,100 over the past three years for the cause.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

Kids, send us your Santa letters

Attention all Whitchurch-Stouffville children. *The Tribune* wants to publish your Santa letters and then ship them off to the North Pole. Our publisher has connections and we can ensure all letters arrive to Santa on time despite any postal

delays. We will publish as many letters as we can in the upcoming issues leading to Christmas. Letters must be handwritten by the children themselves - not by moms and dads.

So get busy and write Santa your Christmas wish list. Since

Santa subscribes to *The Tribune*, he'll get a good chuckle from seeing the letters in print. Send your letters to *The Tribune*, 6244 Main Street, Stouffville, ON L4A 1E2, fax them to 640-5477 or email us at thetrib@istar.ca

NO HORSE PLAY: Members of Stouffville's business community will meet this week to discuss how to pump more dollars into the town's equestrian industry.

Tourism big ticket item across York

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include Lismanis and Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce president Helene Johnson. Figures released by York

Region show that 1.7 million tourist visits are made annually to the region, and tourists spend a whopping \$180 million in York's municipalities each year, Johnson pointed out.

Pulling the local equestrian industry together is a sound idea, she added.

"Anything we can do would be good for the community," said Johnson.



MAY DAY: Daryl May (left) presents a cheque for \$6,000 to Susan Harmsen, 2nd Icepad committee secretary, and Mayor Wayne Emmerson in front of the already completed facility. The money is from the Brad May Celebrity Golf Classic held in June at the Mill Run Golf and Country Club.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN



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