

JAKES
on Main

"If the wind is not blowing, you in our direction, adjust your sails."

ST. PAT'S BASH
TUESDAY
MARCH 17
470-6955
Unionville

THE TRIBUNE

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YEAR OF

PAGE 9

**GET CAUGHT IN
THE RAIN**

page 9

**Stapley's got
your Sports. P. 12**

Tories invest in York's kids

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

Carol Ferguson's son Joey never knew what a refrigerator was until he was five.

The word wasn't in his vocabulary, the woman said yesterday. "He couldn't hear us say 'refrigerator' and learn to say it," she explained.

"I knew he couldn't talk but I didn't know why he couldn't talk."

As frustration grew in the child and parents, Ferguson wanted speech therapy for Joey, but Joey waited a year. The region's speech program couldn't help him any sooner.

Yesterday, Ontario Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer promised \$890,000 more each year for children's speech and language services in York Region.

The money will bring professional help annually to about 4,700 local children five years old or

younger—more than five times the number getting assistance today. "It means more children than ever before are going to get a better start in life," Witmer said Tuesday at Markham-Stouffville Hospital.

A former teacher, she said she recognized academic failure, health problems and low self-esteem result in children who need such early help and don't get it.

The York Region early speech grant, the second-largest

announced so far in the province, is part of the Tory government's strategy of "early investment" in children, Witmer said.

The Markham-Stouffville Hospital, chosen to lead the program, will put the money to use quickly.

■ Please see page 3 ■

Legion teaches teen patriotism

Stouffville teenagers are being given the chance to get to know Canada by spending a week in the nation's capital.

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 459 is sponsoring Encounters with Canada, a one-week session being held at the Terry Fox Centre in Ottawa, explains local Legion spokesman George Lovett. While there, the students have

the chance to learn about Canada through such programs as law, the arts, communications, science, sports, businesses, politics and "our place in the world," said Lovett.

Students from 15 to 17 years can contact their school guidance counsellor for more information, including how to register.

~ Joan Ransberry



MINI-WIZARD: Jaehyun Cha spells a word as teacher Ciaralene Webb looks on during a Spelling Bee held at Whitchurch-Stouffville Highlands Public School last Friday.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

@random

No hamlet

The community of Ballantrae/Musselman Lake has outgrown its status as a hamlet designation. The community now has a municipal water supply, an existing population of 3,000 people and the growth potential to reach 5,500. Regional Council approved an Official Plan amendment to change the community from its Rural designation to Town or Village, noting a community of this scale

can no longer be considered a hamlet.

Sewer link

The public will be invited to comment on a proposal to expand the community of Stouffville and to link the community to the York-Durham Sewage System. The secondary plan for Stouffville would see the community grow from its current population of 11,000 to about 24,500 by the year 2021. Sewage service for this larger community would be through a connection to the York-Durham System in Markham via the Ninth Line. The public meeting will be held on April 15.

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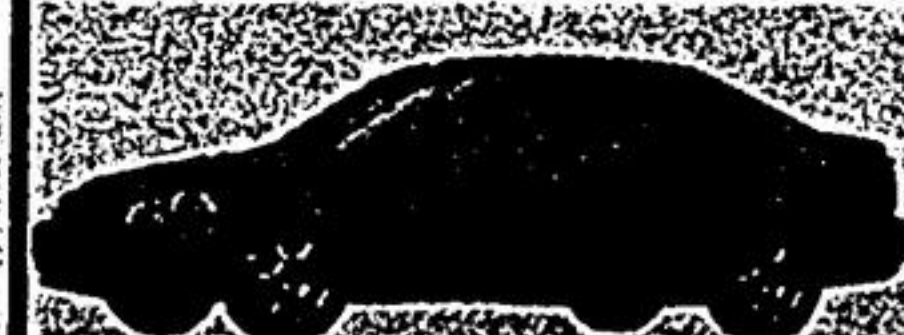
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