

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland Community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

Hospital board must explain its actions

Elizabeth Woodbury, who resigned as president of Markham-Stouffville Hospital on Nov. 6, recently described the role of the hospital's board of directors this way:

"They're guardians of the public trust and represent the community at large."

How true.

And with that responsibility, we might add, comes complete control of what is arguably a community's most important public institution — the hospital.

Which is why, we're again asking the board to provide details of why Woodbury, vice-president Jill Migliardi and planning director Gary Mitchell no longer work at the hospital.

This is not an appeal for information that compromises an individual's right to privacy.

On the contrary.

This is about accountability and the board's ability to provide leadership when it counts the most.

Hiding behind the misguided premise that this is a confidential matter between the employer and employee is a disservice to the hospital, its staff and the public.

The most complete explanation to date came via a faxed letter to this newspaper by Dr. Jim MacLean, the interim president.

Changes made to staffing will not impact on patient care or services provided to the community and are a human resource management issue between the employee and employer.

We wish to notify you that anything reported beyond what has been provided to you by the hospital's spokespersons is entering into speculation of the facts and circumstances pertaining to this matter, and you should govern yourself accordingly.

It is important to note that not only is the public the consumer of care and services provided by the hospital, it also pays the salaries of those who work there.

If the board is the guardian of public trust, how much faith can we place in an institution that refuses to set the record straight so residents can not only assess the performance of staff, but the board itself?

In the wake of what must be considered a major shakeup of senior management, serious questions arise. Among them:

- What are the board's plans to help the hospital accommodate Markham's massive growth? Woodbury suggested last month that financial assistance from the province was inadequate and that some programs could suffer as a result. Is this true?

- Are the hospital's finances in order and on budget? Prior to her departure, Woodbury expressed concern that a provincial requirement to keep detailed statistics on emergency-room use would force the hospital to direct money away from patient care and into administration. Will this happen?

But instead of substance, to place this high-level shuffle into its proper context, the public is left with no choice but to speculate on the hospital's state of affairs.

Their health depends on it.

JEERS, NO CHEERS

■ **JEERS:** To all York Region public elementary school teachers and the York Region District School Board for ignoring children's needs and their rights in order to play out a ridiculous game for power. Shame to all teachers who say they don't want to strike, but for sheepishly following the union's hardball approach, and shame to trustees for letting this happen. Grow up and get back to work.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Students get their sports

Once upon a time there was a Catholic teachers' strike. Everyone in the kingdom of York Region was very sad, but then the teachers went back, and everyone was happy. And everyone lived happily ever after. The End.

Ohhh, but that wasn't the end. A few high school students from Brother Andre Catholic High School realized that school without sports wasn't fun. Since there was nothing they could do about it at their own school, they came up with a plan to bring sports to the elementary schools in the lovely little town of Stouffville.

The leader of the group, Andrea Brugger, and the committee members Claudia Petramala, Nicole Brugger, and Daniel Rossi, went around to the four schools in Stouffville and spoke to their principals and phys-ed teachers. Their plan was to organize after school intramural tournaments to expose the students to the sports they were missing and have a little bit of fun themselves.

In order to be able to have trophies and t-shirts for the winners of the tournaments, the group had to raise money. So, they had a car wash, and raised \$380.

Our group is called Synergy, which means "The whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts."

Thanks to all the hockey parents who were at the rec centre all day and found time for us, to the rec centre staff for letting us use the facilities, and to everyone else who came out to get their car washed. A special thanks to all the volunteers who came and helped wash all those cars.

CLAUDIA PETRAMALA
STOUFFVILLE

Government shouldn't support separate schools

School closings are being forced on boards by the province, and it is an outrage. The recent announcement that the closings are to be put off for a year offers little consolation.

What the public is not being told, is that the closing of schools is the direct result of the government's decision to continue maintaining financial support for a duplicate separate school system. By the government's own admission, the cost to the public to maintain separate schools is \$200 million, each and every year.

This represents about \$1 million for every school day. If the separate system were abolished (as it has been in Manitoba, Newfoundland, and Quebec) that \$200 million could be used to improve the quality of education and to keep neighbourhood schools open.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva has questioned Canada on its continued support for separate schools in Ontario.

The U.N. recognizes that preferential school funding for one religious denomination represents a not only a violation of our own Charter of Rights but of international rights as well.

We must move into the next century in a society which recognizes the dignity and worth of every single child, a society that is not divided by the demand that one segment pay a heavy social and financial cost to support the unnecessary and outdated privilege of another.

EVA F. ASHICK
PEMBROKE



Debora Kelly

Labour disputes a part of the curriculum

I'm outraged it came to this — a

lockout. There is no school, and the York Region public board is warning parents to dig in for the long haul as it wages war with its elementary teachers.

Forget that.

One day into the lockout, my six-year-old son told me he missed school.

"I'm sad that I can't go to school, Mommy," he said.

I'm sad, too.

When I told him the day before that he wouldn't be going to school until his teachers and the people who run the schools work out their differences, he calmly accepted the news without asking questions.

At the tender age of six, in his second year of formal education, he is used to being tossed out of school and left dangling in the wind while teachers, unions, bureaucrats and politicians lob grenades at each other.

That labour disputes and their accompanying school closures are a part of the curriculum in Ontario schools now is shameful.

It's pathetic, absolutely inexcusable, that our schools should be closed again.

The Bill 160 debacle remains fresh in the minds of us all — and while that has parents and students heartsick and frustrated at the reality of more missed days of school, it has left others merely intent on scoring political points.

Forget that.

Like the many parents who rallied at the school board's headquarters in Aurora Monday morning, let me repeat the message: Open the schools — now. I'm not choosing sides.

In fact, I am no longer listening to the noise from the province, school board and union. What they say doesn't matter an iota until the schools are open.

There can be no justification in this dispute for closing schools.

And, to make it even worse, they're not even negotiating, for Pete's sake.

The province, boards, teachers and their unions must come up with another way to deal with deadlocked labour disputes — which have become a way of life that won't ever go away. Cutbacks, doing less with more, is our reality.

But first, just open the schools.

That is what we all want, including any of the teachers which I have spoken to.

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