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8 Following the resignations of three hospital executives, board powers will be reviewed.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Memory tree ceremony for bereaved families
WHEN: Tuesday, Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Newmarket Community Centre



16 The Salvation Army gears up for its annual kettle drive to help those in need.

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SATURDAY FOCUS

Bereaved parents share their grief, remember their children

An unthinkable loss

Sheila McNeil will light her sixth candle in honour of son, Dan

BY RICK VANDERLINDE
 STAFF WRITER

The first Christmas was the worst. Like most parents mourning the loss of a child, Sheila McNeil could barely cope with the accidental death of her 19-year-old son Dan on Oct. 18, 1992.

But the Stouffville mother's pain was eased a little when she joined other bereaved parents at the Memory Tree of Light Service in Newmarket that year.

"It saved my life," McNeil says. "It got me through the worst Christmas. There was always someone there to talk to who knew where I was coming from without having to explain too much."

Since that ceremony, McNeil has become a trained facilitator with York Region's chapter of Bereaved Families of Ontario.

She will light her sixth candle for Dan at the Memory Tree service at the Newmarket community centre on Cedar Street next Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Dan was killed in a freak car accident on his way home from a hockey game in Port Perry.

He was a passenger in a car that crashed after hitting a patch of black ice in Goodwood, killing him instantly.

Dan's team, the Uxbridge Bruins, retired his sweater in his memory.

After enduring a Christmas season that was "a blur," McNeil became more involved with Bereaved Families of York Region in 1993.

"I don't really remember that first Christmas — it's like a fog to me," she said. "But we got through it."

She has led three bereavement groups since becoming a facilitator.

"It's been a great help," she said.



PHOTO/CELIA BRONKHORST

Sheila McNeil remembers her son Dan, who was killed in a car accident in 1992 on his way home from a hockey game in Port Perry. McNeil will attend the Memory Tree service for bereaved families in Newmarket next Tuesday.

See HELPING, page 11.

Grade 3s tops in math, reading

York students achieve Ontario's top math scores

BY JENNIFER BROWN
 STAFF WRITER

It's one of the smallest schools in the region with only 162 students, but Flowervale Public School has taken top spot in the public board's list of Grade 3 test results.

Of the 26 students at the "traditional school with an alternative program" who wrote the standardized reading, writing and math tests, 95 per cent reached level three or four — the highest of the 98 schools that wrote the test.

Last year, the Thornhill school placed third in the ranking, but Flowervale principal Dianne Leggatt was still surprised to see this year's results.

"We did quite well last year and I thought 'How will we maintain it next year?' I'm really blown away by this, but we really had a very good group of students," she said. "We were actually more thrilled with the math because we were at 100 per cent there."

Thornhill schools performed well overall, with E.J. Sand Public School taking a close second place to Flowervale with 93 per cent of all students at level three or above. It, too, had 100 per cent scores in math.

The highest-rated school in northern York Region was J.L.R. Bell in Newmarket with 89 per cent at level three and four.

Principal Bill Hargreaves credits a new code of con-

'We have 93 per cent of students above, at or near the provincial standard and 15 per cent more at level three and four than any other board.'

• Dana Lindsey, board evaluator

See MATH, page 4.

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