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COMMUNITY: York Region hosts 2000 Games

Volunteers sought to help with Special Olympics

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

York Region is preparing to host 700 athletes, 164 coaches, 500 parents, 2,500 volunteers and at least 10,000 spectators at the 2000 Ontario Special Olympics Spring Games.

And organizers need all the help they can get.

Games vice-chairperson Lina Bigioni addressed Markham councillors Tuesday, asking for support and reminding them the May event will translate into a \$5-million economic impact for the region.

The Special Olympics have been supported by police forces across the country for years, and the York Regional Police force is no exception.

A torch run is held annually to raise funds, and officers and civilian employees have raised more than \$100,000 from payroll deductions, Const. Adam Stock told council.

"The York Regional Police's goal is to raise \$1 million. Our second goal is to meet and exceed the Special Olympics standard and create the standard for which all future games are measured," he said.

Close to \$300,000 of the total has been raised so far, Bigioni said. The Games themselves have a \$860,000 budget, but a little left over will help fund training and other sports programs in the region, she said.

Events include five- and ten-pin bowling, swimming, powerlifting and floor hockey, and will run May 11 to 14, 2000.

If you can help, either by volunteering time or donating money, call the Special Olympics office in Newmarket at (905) 953-9649 or e-mail at 2000springgames@home.com.

More information is available on the Games' web site at www.2000ospringgames.com.

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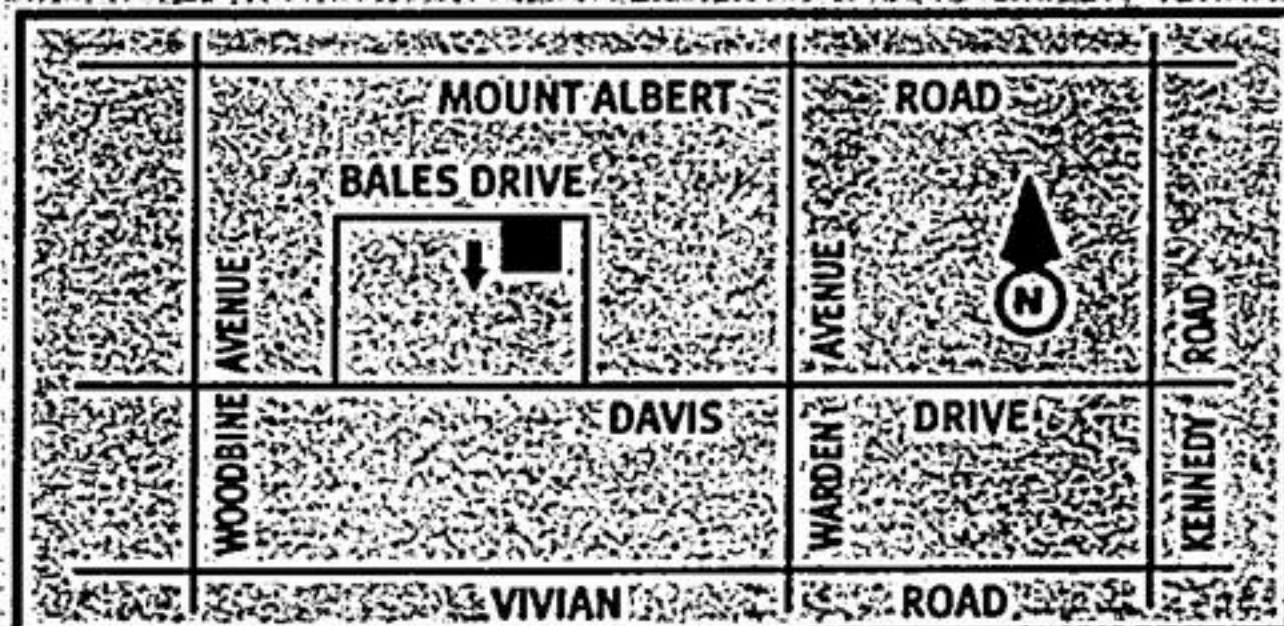
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