

Aphasia Centre marks 10 years

BY JANET RICHARDS
Correspondent

Ten years ago, the York-Durham Aphasia Centre opened in Stouffville's Parkview Village.

Yesterday evening, anyone who had been involved with the centre since its inception was invited to attend an open house to celebrate the 10th anniversary.

Ruth Patterson, a speech pathologist with the centre, says aphasia is a loss of the ability to communicate caused by injury to the brain, such as a stroke or a brain injury.

The Aphasia Centre teaches adults with communication problems coping techniques and helps them integrate into society.

The Stouffville program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. A program in Richmond Hill is funded through York Central Hospital, the Maple location is funded by the York Region Public Health and a Newmarket program is currently operated through fundraising.

The centres each have a core staff, including speech therapists and social workers, supported by volunteers who are trained in communication strategies.

"We have about 75 volunteers who run group programs," says Patterson.

Clients are grouped according to interests and each group is run by two volunteers, who also help clients and their families make life history commu-

nication books.

Patterson says these books, which include photographs and information about a client's life before their stroke or injury, are especially helpful for those with no speech.

Patterson and social worker Anne Wells have been with the centre since it opened. At that time, the only location was in Stouffville.

Patterson says Parkview Village has

supported the centre from the beginning, letting them use the facility even in the early days when funding was uncertain.

"Vera and John Hall of Parkview have been wonderfully supportive," she says. "They provided a home for us."

She also credits Alan Chamberlain, whose wife suffered from aphasia, with founding the centre and getting her and Wells interested in the project.

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Customers warned of Hydro changes

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Whitchurch-Stouffville Hydro is expected to be disbanded by the end of June.

The legal process designed to put the utility on the market is underway, while a seminar giving Hydro customers information on what the future holds is set for May 23 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Latham Hall.

The first seminar in early April attracted 18 customers.

The public can expect to choose their own supplier by November. At the seminar, customers will be advised on "what to look for and what to avoid in a power contract," said local Hydro manager Charlie Jackson.

Proposals to buy the utility will be accepted as of May 8, while the final proposal will be selected at the end of June.

Council recently agreed to explore selling its municipally owned and operated electric utility, affecting 3,500 customers.

The town could make up to \$525,000 in the sale. A condition of sale includes job guarantees for local employees.

One option could be to amalgamate with a neighbouring municipality such as Markham, Ward 3 councillor Peter Dobrich suggested.

The pending sale is part of a province-wide move to get rid of municipally owned electric utilities. Of the 200 utilities spread across Ontario, 50 have been sold.

Neighbouring Uxbridge joined together with Ajax-Pickering, while the Town of Georgina is soon expected to sell its utility.

Change came in October 1998 when the province passed the Energy Competition Act (Bill 35) as a way of introducing competition at the wholesale and retail sectors of Ontario's electrical utilities by 2000.

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