

MOTHERS ASK GOD TO WATCH OVER THEIR SCHOOL



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Jane Philpott, Lois Niessl, Judy Wideman and Heidi Blencowe of Moms In Touch pray for the wellbeing of Summitview Public School students and teachers.

POWER OF PRAYER

BY CINDY WHITE
Correspondent

As schools rely more than ever on volunteers, from chaperoning field trips to helping out in a kindergarten class or baking cupcakes for fundraising, some Stouffville moms have found a unique way to support their children's school.

They pray. They're called Moms In Touch and every week they get together to pray for Summitview Public School, its teachers, staff and all the children.

While the women do not discuss their prayers with others, a recent session included prayers of thanks for school equipment and for skilled teachers as well as asking God for the safety of children going on a field trip. One even conceded they prayed for a resolution during the last teachers strike.

The moms are convinced their prayers work. "While nobody can necessarily prove the results (of our prayers), we can see ourselves, it has its effect," said Jane Philpott, who joined the group two years ago.

"Issues were concerned about that we've prayed for we've seen resolved. It's very encouraging to us."

Moms In Touch is an international organization with groups in more than 90 countries. Anyone can start a group by contacting the organization to receive a booklet, which has been translated into 15 languages.

In Canada, it is known as Mothers Who Care, but the Summitview group prefers to go by the name Moms In Touch because, said Jane Philpott, "All mothers care."

For some, the prayer group helps them cope with their youngsters being under another's care for the first time.

"It was really hard sending my baby off to school," Heidi Blencowe said.

The moms have a list of all the teachers and other staff at the school, whom they pray for by name. They meet every week for an hour at one of the member's homes.

Once preschool-age children are playing happily in another room, the group leader begins with a reading from a book of scripture, usually on a theme such as obedience, kindness or courage. After that, the women pray about concerns they have that week while focusing on the list of names of staff. Sometimes they even pray for people at the Ministry of Education.

The women sit in the living room with their eyes closed, praying aloud in turn, with a few moments of silence between prayers.

They say they don't chat or gossip; they don't

even serve refreshments. And what they pray about isn't talked about outside of their prayer circle.

Group leader Judy Wideman, who also sits on Summitview's school council, says all the teachers know about Moms In Touch.

"We give the staff little gifts or mementoes at different times of the year. It could be muffins or at Christmas it was a candy cane, and always with a little note of encouragement attached," she said. "They're very appreciative. Some even make prayer requests."

Philpott, who has three children at Summitview, first heard about Moms In Touch while working as a missionary in Africa. When her family moved to Stouffville, she joined the prayer group. She sits on the literacy committee at the school as well.

"I feel very strongly about prayer. I believe it's a powerful way to be involved in our lives," she said. "And praying with other people is a good way to focus one hour a week when we otherwise might not make the time."

Glad Park Public School has a Mothers Who Care group praying for it this year, while at different times Orchard Park and Whitchurch-Highlands public schools have also had prayer groups.

Arlene Raymer, now with Glad Park's Mothers Who Care, joined when her son was entering school.

"He was being cared for by other people at school and even though I couldn't be there physically, I could pray. God can have an influence."

While Moms In Touch helps mothers with Christian values get together and pray, and many also volunteer in the school, the organization insists it must not be used as a lobby group.

Heather Neilsen, principal at Summitview, says Moms In Touch is a quietly supportive group that makes staff feel appreciated.

"They're an extra layer of support," she said. "They're very reassuring and positive."

That's exactly why Lois Niessl said she joined this year.

"I appreciate all the work the teachers do," she said. "They do work that I couldn't do. They do work that needs God's help."

So what if you're a concerned Christian dad? Beth Boyd, a member for 10 years, says in spite of the name it's not for moms only.

"I think the name comes from the fact that mothers are more traditionally the ones who are at home and able to get together," she said. "If we had a father who wanted to be part of it he's more than welcome."

In fact, the organization's web site offers advice on how to form any kind of group from Fathers In Touch to Homeschoolers In Touch.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK EXPROPRIATIONS ACT

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO EXPROPRIATE LAND

IN THE MATTER OF an application by The Regional Municipality of York for approval to expropriate lands and interest in lands described in Schedules "A", "B" and "C" hereto, in the Town of Markham in The Regional Municipality of York, for the purposes of the widening and reconstruction of Kennedy Road (YR 3) from 16th Avenue (YR 73) to Major Mackenzie Drive (YR 25), to a basic width of 36.0 metres with additional widenings at cuts, fills, watercourse crossing and intersections, to provide a basic four-lane road with left-turn and right-turn lanes at intersections.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that application has been made for approval to expropriate the lands and interest in lands described in Schedules "A", "B" and "C" hereto. Any owner of lands in respect of which notice is given who desires an inquiry into whether the taking of such land is fair, sound and reasonably necessary in the achievement of the objectives of the expropriating authority shall so notify the approving authority in writing,

- (a) in the case of a registered owner, served personally or by registered mail within thirty days after the registered owner is served with the notice, or, when the registered owner is served by publication, within thirty days after the first publication of the notice;
- (b) in the case of an owner who is not a registered owner, within thirty days after the first publication of the notice.

The approving authority is:
The Council of The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Box 147
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

The Regional Municipality of York
Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk
17250 Yonge Street
Box 147
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

This notice first published on the 11th day of May, 2000.

SCHEDULE "A"

An estate in fee simple in the lands described as follows:

Lands in the Town of Markham in The Regional Municipality of York, geographically in the Township of Markham in the County of York, being composed of those lands designated as Parts on Plans deposited in the Land Registry Office for the Land Titles Division of York Region more particularly described as follows:

Part of Lot	Concession/ Plan	Part(s)	Plan
E 1/2 Lot 16	5	3	65R-22229
17	5	4	65R-22229
17	6	5 and 7	65R-22229
2	3555	1	65R-22327
17	6	2	65R-22327

SCHEDULE "B"

TEMPORARY EASEMENT

A temporary easement or rights in the nature of a temporary easement expiring on December 31, 2001, in, under, over, along and upon lands in the Town of Markham in The Regional Municipality of York, geographically in the Township of Markham in the County of York, being composed of part of the East 1/2 of Lot 16, Concession 5, designated as Part 2 on Plan 65R-22229 for the purpose of entering upon and occupying the lands with all necessary machinery, equipment and material required for the purpose of grading.

SCHEDULE "C"

TEMPORARY EASEMENT

A temporary easement or rights in the nature of a temporary easement expiring on December 31, 2001, in, under, over, along and upon lands in the Town of Markham in The Regional Municipality of York, geographically in the Township of Markham in the County of York, being composed of part of Lot 17, Concession 6, designated as Parts 6 and 8 on Plan 65R-22229 for the purpose of entering upon and occupying the lands with all necessary machinery, equipment and material required for the purpose of grading and to allow for the construction of the retaining wall.

