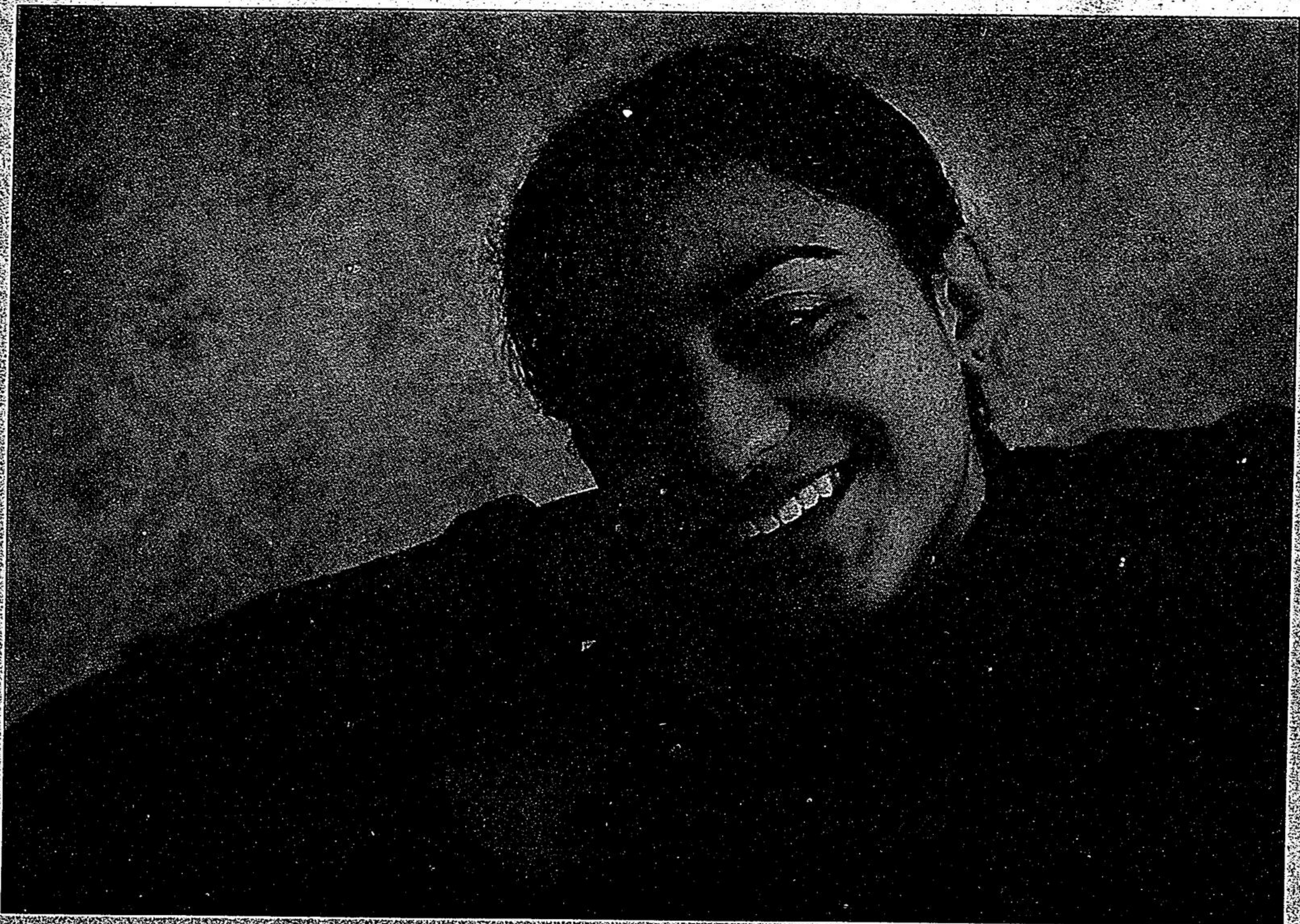


Many people work selflessly to make a difference in the lives of York Region residents

The SPIRIT of VOLUNTEERING



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Eighteen-year-old Tavlin Kaur has made a difference in her community with her volunteer work at Humber River Hospital and in her own school, assisting students in their search for volunteer placement opportunities.

Student volunteers at hospital and school

Tavlin Kaur organizes fundraising events, helps students find volunteer posts, holds down job

BY PATRICK MANGION
Staff Writer

Tavlin Kaur may be just 18 and a student at Vaughan Secondary School, but she's already a shining example of selfless generosity.

Kaur volunteers at Humber River Hospital, helping the nurses, heads the student volunteer association at her school and juggles a part-time job, school work and soccer practice. She seems to have mastered the onerous art of time management.

Kaur, a Grade 12 student, has volunteered at the hospital since she was 14 and plans to attend university to pursue a science degree and, maybe, medical school.

When asked why she decided to volunteer, Kaur said it just seemed to make sense.

"It just clicked. It's good experience working with nurses. I like helping people in the community," Kaur said.

Some students would have the attitude of why bother volunteering? But (volunteering) shows students how lucky we are.

She also raises money for the hospital by organizing various fundraisers, such as car washes, candygrams and the Apotex Challenge—a sponsored run/walkathon held in the spring.

Kaur helps ensure these fundraisers are successful by making sure the events have been advertised and by helping to coordinate volunteers.

Rewarding as her role may seem, Kaur felt she could still do more, deciding to share her years of volunteer experience in the medical field to fill another need at her school.

A lot of her time with the student volunteer association (SVA) is spent helping fellow students find causes and organizations to fulfill their required hours of community service.

And that's just fine with Kaur. She says it's a win-win situation for students and the community.

Once students try their hand at philanthropy, they're hooked, says Kaur. It changes their outlook on life.

"Some students would have the attitude of why bother volunteering? But (volunteering) shows students how lucky we are."

The SVA, which started two years ago, now has 92 members.

Kaur is currently organizing a charity basketball game between the school team and OPP officers; a blood drive in June, the Apotex run and a reading buddy program with local elementary students.

"It's a good feeling to know your hard work is going to help people."

—Shirley Smullen, Kaur's guidance counsellor at Vaughan Secondary School, recommended her as one of York Region's super volunteers.

Some more volunteers of note

VOLUNTEERING FOR VETERANS

Lillian Harwood of Newmarket dedicated 12 years of her life bringing happiness to members of Newmarket's Veterans Association.

As welfare chairperson, Lillian did many of the little things that unquestionably made a big difference. From simply sending a card or making a visit to an ill member, or ensuring 75 widows received a present at Christmas, she always made time for the organization's 375 members.

—Recommended by Fred Dillman

COMMITTED TO HER SCHOOL

Carolynn Haidasz's tireless efforts at St. Gregory the Great School in Woodbridge help ensure everything from lunches for 500 students, fundraisers and masses all go smoothly.

She is also chairperson of the parent guild at the school, co-ordinating 30 other moms to help with various other projects.

—Recommended by Anna Herhalt

LEARNING FROM AND HELPING SENIORS

Richmond Hill resident Jim Lowthian has been a volunteer driver for seniors as part of CHATS (Community Home Assistance To Seniors) for the past seven years. He takes clients shopping, to medical appointments and the hospital. Jim says the continual learning through listening to seniors, along with simply being a friend, are compensation enough for his efforts.

—Recommended by Chris Ward

DO YOU KNOW A SUPER VOLUNTEER?

We'll be honouring the efforts of York Region volunteers on a monthly basis in this regular feature celebrating the Year of the Volunteer.

Send your recommendations to Brenda Larson, Editor in Chief, Box 236, 5808 Steven Cr., Newmarket, ON, L3Y 4X1, or by email to blarson@erabanner.com, or by fax to (905) 853-4626.