

Character the focus of regional workshop

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

Character. What does it mean to you?

That's the central question in an exercise aimed to make York Region Canada's first "Character Community".

It's an exercise backed by a simple philosophy, according to Markham Mayor Don Cousens, who is spearheading the project.

"There are a lot of things that are important in life, but there's nothing more important than being of good character," he said.

Good character, and the attributes which contribute to it, will be the theme of a workshop being held today at York Region's headquarters in Newmarket.

Guest speakers will brief a standing committee of regional politicians, business people, educators and citizens' groups on the successes of the Character Community movement in the United States.

York Region hopes to promote a list of attributes which will create a more respectful, caring and safe community.

While such an initiative

could be dismissed as a utopian pipedream, Cousens believes it can make a difference.

"The only way it will be successful is if people buy into it," he said.

"We're not even sure what the values will be that we want to push, but we believe it's going to have a positive effect on the behaviour of everyone.

"If it strengthens our society, so much the better."

The region is drawing upon the experience of the York Region District School Board, which has implemented its own character initiative.

Encouraging students to consider and adopt such positive attributes as respect, honesty and integrity is beginning to paying off, according to Avis Glaze, associate director of education.

"We're already seeing results," she said.

Glaze said students are considering the consequences of their actions while avoiding or resolving confrontations.

"This is about respect," Glaze said. "It means teach-

ing by example.

"It means honouring, confirming and validating the characteristics we consider to be important."

Glaze, a member of the region's task force, said it makes sense for the community at large to expand on the notion of character confirmation.

She envisions a program that confirms and promotes the attributes that will make for sound, secure families and communities.

"This is Canadian, isn't it?" she said. "This is what's going to make our country the car-

To that end, York Region residents will be asked what the initiative should entail. Cousens wants the project to be inclusive and diverse.

"It's like a farmer preparing his field before he plants the seed," he said.

"You have to be sure it's ready and receptive before you plant."

A plan of action for the Character Community committee will be formed following today's seminar and the initiative may be launched next month.



Dr. Avis Glaze says encouraging students to adopt character virtues like integrity and honest is beginning to pay off.

It means honouring... the characteristics we consider to be important.

FUTURE SHOP

CORRECTION NOTICE

In our November 21-27, 2001 Future Shop flyer the following error occurred:

• On page 4, the PlayStation 2 game Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance (SKU# 10009651) release will be delayed.

The estimated time of arrival to Future Shop is now December 3, 2001.

• On page 26, the Maytag Neptune Front Load Laundry Pair (SKU# MAH5500/MDE5500) was incorrectly advertised. The yellow callout states "Gas Dryer Only \$60" the callout should read "Gas Dryer Only \$60 more." Future Shop will not be honouring the Gas Dryer for \$60 price.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our valued customers.

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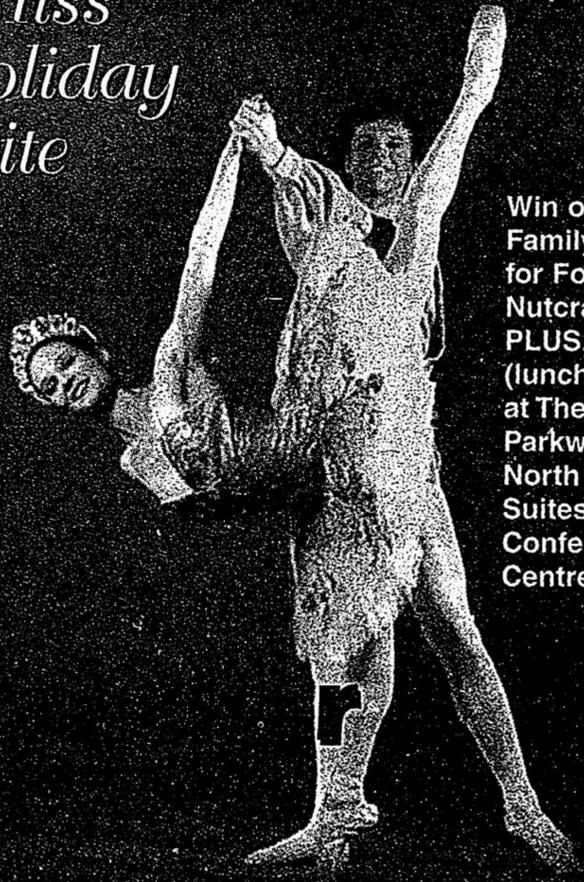


The Salvation Army Markham Family Services is now taking applications for the Christmas Cheer Program. We are now located at 5286 16th Avenue. The deadline for applications is December 14th. Call our office at (905) 472-3009 to book an appointment. Two pieces of identification REQUIRED for each family member, including proof of income and address.

Volunteers are needed, starting November 22nd to December 24th to stand at the Bubbles (kettles) to receive donations on behalf of The Salvation Army at Markville Mall and various other locations in the Markham/Unionville area. Please call LISA CHAN at (905) 472-3009.

Volunteers are also needed during the day to sort incoming food and pack food hampers, and other various tasks. Anyone who can help in this way or to make donations contact SHIRLEY SCOTT at (905) 472-3009.

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