

Volunteers needed for Youth Day

From page 20.

young Christians from more than 145 countries.

This year marks the 17th version of the annual event, which invites participants to visit Toronto in July so they can share their faith during a range of activities such as masses and community outreach projects.

Ms Sutton is in charge of publicizing WYD at her school and by distributing posters and other materials, she has managed to have 35 students there agree to attend the event. She's aiming to increase that number to 50.

The choir director at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nobleton said she's not daunted by the forces of popular culture which often distract youth from activities that involve religious faith.

"You're always going to have your stereotypes of youth who say it's boring or whatever.

"If you explain it and hype it up, then people are going to be interested," she said. "At least, that's the case at my school."

And it's important for organizers to recruit more volunteers to help stage the event and families to provide temporary



STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

Nadia Sutton, a student at Cardinal Carter Catholic High School, is in charge of publicizing World Youth Day celebrations at her York Region school.

homes for its participants.

Ms Parsons said only 150 people are putting together WYD and 10,000 have agreed to serve at its biggest events — a far cry from the 35,000 organiz-

ers are looking for.

She admitted recruiting is a "daunting" task but added organizers are busy talking to members of service groups and other organizations.

Many youths will sleep in school gymnasiums, but organizers still need 80,000 families to open up their homes to the remaining WYD participants.

Ms Parsons urged families in York Region and the rest of the Greater Toronto Area to put aside any reservations about having strangers inside their homes.

"People who come to WYD are young people who are on a spiritual journey," she said.

"You're really serving Christ by serving these young people. Nothing bad has ever happened at WYD before.

"It's not like they'd be welcoming a Hells Angels chapter from France."

Though the event is open to people of any faith, activities are geared to Roman Catholics and other Christians.

The Pope or a replacement is slated to lead an opening mass at the Ex on July 23 and a final one on the Downsview Lands five days later.

TV 'can't be a babysitter'

From page 16.

"This seminar has real value," he noted, adding he hopes Ms Millar will visit his school.

"It is probably critical to watch television as a family," said Parkview library resource teacher Blair Pike. "It can't be a babysitter and shows should be open to discussion."

Mr. Pike said Parkview staffers have challenged students to record how long they can be media free.

This was another reason for Ms

Millar's visit, to inform school representatives of the issues they will be discussing with children after the challenge.

"Linda's presentation was terrific and it dealt with the topics we will be covering with our students — body image, equity, character and education," said Parkview principal Beverley Lee.

New CCA commercials are airing next month on bullying and in November on the dangers of second-hand smoke.

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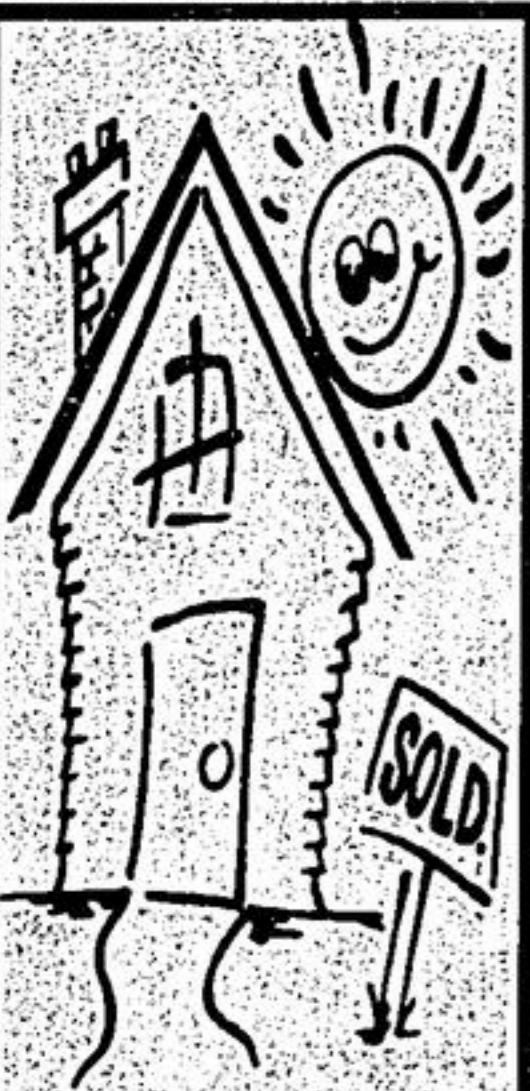
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