

# Students should make volunteering work for them

BY STACEY HALE  
At the Schools Writer

Ah, summer. The beaches, the sun, what's not to love? I'm sure everyone has gotten a chance to work on that chalky white winter complexion, right? Time for a reality check.

I know the last thing anybody wants to hear about is school, but for some of us this reality is creeping closer and closer.

Those 40 hours of community service are rearing their ugly heads and threatening to steal away that hard-earned diploma.

As most of us hopefully know by now, to graduate as of 2003, 40 hours of community service are required.

We first learned of these hours at the beginning of our high school careers and, at some point, we must face up to them. Kudos to those who have successfully completed the task.

For those procrastinators out there, I've put together a survival package that will hopefully help those of you in need of some guidance.

The contents of this package provide useful information, contacts and opinions concerning the required 40 hours.

First, the lockdown. It was decided that, as part of the new curriculum, more community involvement would be a great way to get students involved, to give them a sense of achievement and for character development.

Lo and behold, the hours were deemed mandatory. The York Region Board of Education believes the new curriculum will help students prepare for the demands of the 21st century.

It is our job as students to have the ability to respond critically and creatively to new situations and challenges.

The hours give everyone the

responsibility to get out into the world and deal with real situations.

It's good experience with definite benefits, comments Heather Franzisi, who works with volunteers at Cedarvale Lodge, a retirement home in Keswick.

## You can't go wrong helping out people.

"The Catholic students have always been required to complete 10 hours of community service as part of their diploma requirements, the public schools have just adopted the idea," she says.

As for opinions on the subject, most find it a great idea. Well, you can't go wrong helping out your people.

Hey guys, why not make it count. Little Johnny has always wanted to be an astronaut, so he

can volunteer at an earth space science centre or even NASA and improve his resume, killing two birds with one stone.

There are some important rules to remember for successful completion of your 40 hours, so make sure you review them to avoid any complications.

Some general rules include: you cannot fulfill the requirements through activities counted toward a credit, for example, co-op opportunities, or through paid work or by assuming duties normally performed by a paid employee.

You must maintain and provide a record of your community service time, which should later be assessed by your principal, who will decide whether you've successfully fulfilled the requirements.

Lastly, hours cannot be done during normal instructional school time.

They can be done any time

throughout your high school career, including lunch hours, after school, weekends and school holidays.

There are some useful contacts that can direct you to placements of your choice or placements of availability.

The York Region School Board website has plenty of information on diploma requirements and a great handbook of information for volunteers available at [www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/)

York Region Volunteers maintains a great website with links to organizations looking for student volunteers.

You could contact your local community centre or just call up the organization you're interested in volunteering for. All it takes is a little effort.

Stacey Hale is a student at Keswick High School.

# Teenagers face discrimination at businesses around region

BY ADRIAN CORSON  
At the Schools Writer

Businesses with an apparent dislike for teenagers could be facing a harsh reality.

Michelle Viceli, a 16-year-old student, is one of many teens growing less tolerant of the extra-cautious attitude toward teens held by some businesses in the region.

"It has to stop," she says.

The summer only underlines the problems of age discrimination, since job hunting isn't nearly as popular as hanging out.

This predicament generates numerous problems, especially in a world where the teenager is perceived as more of a social nuisance than a contributing member of society.

People are increasingly cautious of teenagers.

According to a 2001 survey and study on community safety in the City of Vaughan, 90 per cent of people felt 13 to 19 year-olds were primarily responsible for acts of vandalism, as opposed to 78 per cent of people

in 1995.

Consequently, businesses have followed suit, acting increasingly more suspicious and apprehensive toward anyone without a driver's licence and the opportunity to vote.

Movie theatres are particularly vigilant of this age group.

Employment of security guards to watch this "uncontrollable" crowd has become a standard deterrent.

Ironically, movie theatres rely on the teenage demographic for a large lump of revenue in view of the fact many movies are exclusively for the 12 to 18-year-old market.

Christina Resciniti of Maple recently encountered some less-than-kind security guards at a movie theatre.

"I went to see a movie and I was surrounded by security guards who thought I was sneaking into theatres solely because of my age.

"They were constantly harassing me to see my ticket and they have forced me outside in sub-zero temperatures because they fear I'll cause trouble."

"They don't respect teenagers

enough to deserve my business."

This attitude has infiltrated many businesses.

Surely every teenager has experienced the clingy sales associates, hanging around warily, almost deviously, as you walk around the store.

Some convenience stores have employed strategically placed signs to deter the pre-teen and teen crowds.

One particular convenience store in Vaughan displays a "No kids using the slushy machine"

banner above the frosted drinks.

Some more blatant and serious than others, such signs remain concrete examples of discrimination against youths.

Security guards at malls are at the heart of commercial businesses teeming with teen crowds.

One security guard, who did not wish to be identified, argued there is no age discrimination against teens.

She explained that unless teens are causing a ruckus, they are allotted fair treatment.

Whether or not this attitude is practised, the fact remains teens have grown to be somewhat of a threat.

So, where does this leave society? Are teens completely unwarranted in believing there are age discrimination issues toward the younger members of society, or is it an accumulation of events that have created such beliefs about teens?

Adrian Corson is a student at St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School.

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