

Economist & Sun • Stouffville Tribune

AT THE SCHOOLS

TEACHER OF THE MONTH



STAFF PHOTO/SIMONE JOSEPH

Bonita Hubbard, York Region Newspaper Group's teacher of the month for September, teaches special needs children at Aurora Grove Public School.

Teacher makes special students shine

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

The week Steven Boyle had surgery, his teacher, Bonita Hubbard, phoned his house three times to find out how he was.

When he returned to school the following week, Mrs. Hubbard reacted emotionally at seeing the six-year-old.

"She got down on her knees and said, 'I'm so glad you're back — I missed you.' There were tears in her eyes," said Steven's mother, Betty.

Mrs. Hubbard, who has been a teacher for 13 years, has taught Steven at Aurora Grove Public School for the past two years. In May, Marjory Black, Steven's grandmother, nominated Mrs. Hubbard for teacher of the month in the York Region Newspaper

Group's monthly contest.

"He (Steven) just loved her. They all do. Their faces light up when she appears. She is so compassionate with them and I think they can feel that," Mrs. Black said.

It was about four years ago, during Mrs. Hubbard's last year teaching a regular Grade 2 class, she discovered her passion for teaching special needs children. That year, several handicapped children had been integrated into her class.

"I really felt a bond with them. They were such beautiful people ... It was so rewarding. You got to know the person and you didn't even see the wheelchair or walker any more. You just saw the child," Mrs. Hubbard said.

She decided to devote herself to teaching special needs children

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Bonita Hubbard

at Armitage Village Public School in Newmarket. Then, a year later, she was offered a job teaching a communication class — a unique classroom of six children who have difficulty communicating, some of whom have autism or its traits — at Aurora Grove.

"I felt called to do that, it just seemed like something I was meant to do."

In her two years teaching the class, her enthusiasm for instructing special needs children has paid off.

"Nobody ever made the gains (with Steven) that she did," Steven's mother said.

Steven's grandmother has also noticed a difference in her grandson, who has a developmental disorder that includes autistic traits, during the time he was being taught by Mrs. Hubbard.

"He takes orders much better, he listens better. You get more eye contact with him than you used to."

Joyce Warke, grandmother of Connor Jackson, a nine-year-old

See PARENTS, page 23.

Teens need more fun activities

BY PATRICK MCALPINE
At the Schools Writer

Another weekend comes to an end and youth in York Region likely found something to do.

For most teenagers, the time between Friday evening and Monday morning is an opportunity to put away textbooks and go out with friends.

It seems like a small window in the busy lives of students preparing for their futures.

So why is it many local youths find it difficult to decide what to do in their spare time?

According to many teens, there have been countless conversations regarding an evening's plans on how to battle boredom.

A large group of students has settled into the movie theatre rut.

"I go to movies a lot. At least twice a month," says Brother Andre Catholic High School student Erin Jefferies.

BIG MONEY

Erin, 17, says while she enjoys a good movie, she feels there is often no alternative, adding, however, a night at the movies is becoming a financial concern.

Schoolmate Justin Elliot, 18, agrees. "Between the cost of the movie and going out for a cup of coffee afterward (with a date), a night out can cost \$40 to \$50," says Justin. "It's outrageous. Silvercity now has a \$1.50 amusement tax printed on the ticket. What's that about?"

It is true the prices of movie tickets have continued to rise steadily over the past couple of years.

Attending an evening show at Cineplex Odeon's First Markham theatre costs an adult \$12. This is still better than Famous Players Colossus, which charges \$13.50 general admission.

To some teens, it seems like there is less to do for those under 19.

"I don't need alcohol to have a good time," says Justin. "It is just an accessory

See CHEAP, page 23.

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