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**14** Volunteers gave hundreds of hours to Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum this year.

**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**EVENT:** Stouffville BIA trick-or-treating  
**WHEN:** Saturday, from 12 noon  
**WHERE:** Stouffville Train Station

Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library



**25** In the alleys: You're never too old or young to take to the lanes.

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TO REACH US: (905) 640-2612

## Looking for more foster families in York Region

200 homes needed for abused, neglected kids

BY LISA QUEEN  
 Staff Writer

In desperate need of more than 200 foster homes for York Region's abused and neglected children, the Children's Aid Society has joined six other southern Ontario child welfare agencies in a mass recruiting drive.

Based on a model initiated by the Hamilton Children's Aid, Homes for Kids is a joint project aimed at establishing a standardized method of attracting, training and supporting foster families.

The program, launched this week as part of National Foster Family Week, will also stop the controversial practice of raiding other communities for foster families because of the short supply, according to York CAS executive director Marty McNamara.

He said the need for foster families is skyrocketing in York as the region's population of 800,000 increases by about 40,000 new residents every year.

At the same time, more children are being taken into care. Mr. McNamara couldn't say whether that increase is a result of more children being mistreated or an increase in people reporting suspected abuse.

"The whole thing driving this Homes for Kids initiative is the increasing numbers (of children)

See MORE, page 19.

## Final touches on the Home Show



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stacey Allen of the York Region Newspaper Group receives advice from John Sillaots, host of Home And Garden TV's *In The Workshop*, and a hand from Cathy Chouinard, of Chouinard Brothers Roofing in Markham, finishing a bay window. All will be at the Markham Home Show this weekend at the Markham Fairgrounds. Show hours are Friday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information go to [markhamhomeshow.com](http://markhamhomeshow.com)

## Zapped by hydro rate hikes

Consumers deal with higher rates, post deregulation

BY JEFF MITCHELL  
 Staff Writer

Murray Brown is opting out of the grid. The Georgina farmer figures he has no choice but to seek alternative sources of electricity as hydro charges spiral upward in the newly deregulated market.

It's not as if Mr. Brown enjoyed inexpensive hydro rates before deregulation, the open market has only added to his crippling energy costs.

"The charges before deregulation were atrocious. Some of our bills were approaching \$1,000 a month," said Mr. Brown, whose cash crop farm southeast of Sutton consists of the family home, several outbuildings and a woodworking shop.

Since the hydro market was opened to competition May 1, consumers have been shocked by sharp hikes. Mr. Brown is no exception.

"There's about a 50-per-cent increase and what we're looking at down the road ... will be substantial increases here," he said.

"That's not a very good prospect. They do monthly billing now and our income doesn't come on a monthly basis."

By next spring, Mr. Brown hopes to be outfitted with a deisel-powered generator to light his home and run his farm. He estimates the initial cost for equipment, will be about \$25,000. After that, he expects to spend \$300 a month on fuel.

But with the uncertainty created by fluctu-

See PERFECT, page 3.

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