

## Stouffville Says

By Hannelore Volpe and Jennifer Anderson

**"What are your feelings about the war in Iraq?" (asked at Stouffville District Secondary School)**



**JAIME ARCHER**

"I felt it was wrong. Because of the number of casualties (caused by the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York), I felt it was like a retribution, an eye for an eye."



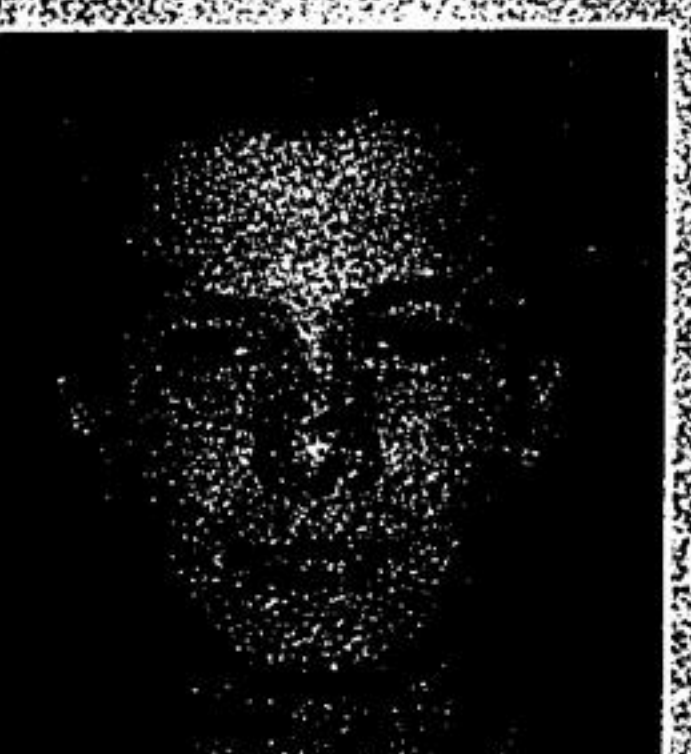
**WALLACE CURRIE**

"I was in favour of the war, not because of the terrorists, but for humanitarian reasons. The Bible says we are our brother's keeper. We should have been there from the beginning."



**AMANDA FOCKLER**

"I'm glad it's over. It shouldn't have happened in the first place. Now I hope everyone can get along."



**JOSH PARSONS**

"I felt the battle was more about greed than freedom. It seemed the main goal was to gain control of the oil flow rather than freeing the Iraqi citizens."



## Lindsay and the kids

Stouffville's Lindsay O'Connor with children from a rural village near Kampala, Uganda. The Christian Blind Mission International employee accompanied a TV crew to shoot a documentary in Africa recently.

PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTIAN BLIND MISSION INTERNATIONAL

# African trip true 'eye opener'

BY HANNELORE VOLPE  
Staff Writer

Stouffville resident Lindsay O'Connor returned from a recent trip to Uganda and Malawi with a better understanding of the words "poverty" and "miracle".

He and a Rogers Television film crew spent almost three weeks in the African countries to film the work done by Christian Blind Mission International's (CBMI) doctors and nurses.

Mr. O'Connor is public relations manager of the charitable organization, which has had its international headquarters on Stouffville Road for 25 years. The trip was part of the anniversary celebrations of CBMI.

A five-part series highlighting the trip has already appeared on Rogers Cable's evening newscast. A half-hour documentary showing the CBMI's overseas programs and Canadian aid dollars at work will air near the end of April.

The "Kiwi," as the former New Zealander calls himself, and the crew visited a number of hospitals specializing in orthopedic and cataract and other sight-saving surgery.

They also brought along a little bit of Canada in the form of notebooks, pencils and other items to give to local children. The school supplies were donated by a class of youngsters from the Mother Goose Academy,

located in Springvale Baptist Church on Stouffville Road.

Mr. O'Connor was impressed with the "passion from the kids" at Mother Goose Academy and the fact that "at such an early age they understand that (kids overseas) need the help of kids just like them."

After landing at Uganda's Entebbe Airport at night, the Canadian travellers were cautioned not to photograph the facility, which like many others in the region, is also an air force base. They encountered frequent military roadblocks as they navigated their way around huge potholes, prompting Mr. O'Connor to observe, "It was like rally driving in our Jeeps."

*Thank the people of  
Canada. Thank the  
people of Canada.*

The Canadians started by filming a cataract operation in Mengo Hospital in Kampala. The operation restored sight to the right eye of 70-year-old Abraham, who "has not seen since he was a kid", Mr. O'Connor said.

They returned a week later after Abraham's left eye had been done. When Mr. O'Connor came into the room to see Abraham, he was hugged by the

grateful man who kept repeating, in perfect English, "Thank the people of Canada. Thank the people of Canada."

Local conditions were a shock to the travellers. They saw people living in mud huts with thatched roofs and dirt floors with mats on the floor serving as beds. "It was the first experience in my life of seeing such poverty," Mr. O'Connor stated, shaking his head. Many children in this area don't go to school because they're working in the fields alongside the village women.

The crew also filmed the distribution of food by international aid agencies to starving people in Malawi, which is currently in the grip of a major famine.

During his trip, Mr. O'Connor would get up at 2 a.m. to broadcast live for Toronto's Sports Radio The Fan 590. He's been hosting the International Sports Report on The Fan on Saturdays for the past six years.

During his trip, Mr. O'Connor saw the power of Canadian toonies at work. He met a smiling two-year-old boy with big glasses perched on his little nose — and clear vision for the first time in his life — paid for by coins donated by Mother Goose.

There are more than 1,056 CBMI projects in 110 countries worldwide.

## Briefly

### Kids hopping for BIA Easter Egg Hunt

The Stouffville BIA's annual Easter Egg Hunt will be hoppin' along Main Street Saturday.

All children accompanied by an adult are invited to gather at the Stouffville Train Station at 1 p.m. to pick up their first treat of the Easter season. They'll also be able to see the winning entries in the Stouffville Community Policing Centre's annual Easter colouring contest.

Children can then head down Main Street to collect more chocolates from participating merchants displaying a colourful bunny in their storefront. Peter Rabbit and a giant Easter chick will be at the Lions Gazebo. Barney the Dinosaur will pay a visit and representatives from the Danone company will provide music and games for the youngsters.

Reid's Consignment Shop has provided about 350 bags of Nutty Chocolater goodies for this year's Easter Egg Hunt.

The event is growing, said Ruth LeBlanc, the BIA's business manager. Last year close to 400 bags of treats were handed out to eager youngsters.

### Churches unite for Good Friday service

Three Stouffville churches will meet as one tomorrow for their traditional Good Friday service.

Christ Church Anglican will welcome guests from Stouffville United and St. James Presbyterian for the 10 a.m. service.

Christ Church is located at 254 Sunset Blvd., next to Orchard Park Public School. For more information call 905-640-1461.

## Quoteworthy

*"We had to get ugly this year."*  
Joe Cornacchia, president of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association on efforts to align with the Markham Waxers AAA program. See story on page 23.

## Contacting Us

Have a news tip? Please:

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Thurs-Fri 10-9pm  
Saturday 10-5pm  
Good Friday