

# Self-massage helps overcome stress

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nose for 10 seconds, and out through the mouth for another 10. This exercise can help you relax, especially before an exam or major test," Ms. McDermott-Brady said.

Even if you can't have a monthly massage, self-massage is another way to relieve stress.

"Placing pressure at the base of your skull, then releasing is a sure-fire way to ease tense neck muscles. For a complete relaxed body,

start at your feet and squeeze the muscles tight, then let go. Continue up your legs and all the way to your face. This technique promotes not only deep relaxation, but blood flow and circulation are improved."

Here are a few additional tips:

- Get a double strap backpack, instead of a one shoulder model, so it distributes weight evenly;

- Never cross your legs, especially while sitting at a desk during those lengthy classes. If you must, cross them at the ankles because,

otherwise, it cuts off circulation and decreases blood flow.

*This technique promotes not only deep relaxation, but blood flow and circulation are improved.*

- When at the computer, lay your feet flat on the floor; and,

- Try switching hands you use for the computer mouse. It may be tricky at first, but alternating dominant and non-dominant hands exercises different sides of the brain and various muscles.

Along with these helpful hints, also remember to take it easy and don't take too much on at once. Stress is something nobody needs or wants. But if you can't remember all this at once, no worries.

Courtney Yip attends Brother Andre Catholic High School.

# Teacher organizes contests

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degree at Brock University, she accepted a position at a private school.

She then put her career on hold for about a decade to raise her family. When she returned to the field five years ago, she came to Ross Doan and Taylor Potter is glad she did.

"She makes school fun," the Grade 4 student wrote in her nominating letter.

"She lets you eat in class, except when the teacher is talking. She has lots of contests to help us learn."

For example, the students recently competed in a cross-Canada drive, moving their toy cars from east to west by correctly identifying provinces and capitals along the way. The first two groups to reach the Pacific Ocean won a pizza lunch.

Right now, the students are learning about Medieval times by moving their knights over a moat and through the different parts of the castle. The first group to use what they've learned to rescue the damsel in distress wins.

Taylor says no prize has been decided yet, but given Ms. Hammond's track record, it's sure to be something yummy.

"My philosophy is, we're together for a long time during the day," she said. "So why sit and be miserable?"

*We would like to thank our Teacher of the Month sponsors for supporting outstanding teachers across York Region. This month's recipient wins a workshop to improve communication skills by Inside Out with Karen Armstrong, soap suds pump for the classroom, from Jennie Coutanche, independent kitchen consultant for The Pampered Chef, \$25 gift certificate from It's Elementary School Supplies at Newmarket Plaza from owner Christine Guldemeester, a \$50 gift certificate from Scholar's Education Centre in Richmond Hill and two tickets to The Red Barn Theatre in Jackson's Point — Canada's oldest professional summer theatre — for one of four major professional productions from the Lake Simcoe Arts Foundation and a \$50 decorative handmade Mosaic stepping stone for her patio or garden from Totally Stoned in Newmarket. To send in a nomination for May's teacher of the month or become a sponsor, e-mail submissions to Ms. Kibble at kibble@ymg.com or fax them to 1-905-853-5379. Deadline is May 16.*

## Students compete in Asian heritage slogan contest

Young people in the region will use their skill at writing or design to express love of their shared origin in a huge continent — Asia.

May is Asian Heritage Month across Canada, says the GTA Citizens' Group.

And when they say Asian, they mean Central and South Asia, as well as the Eastern and Southeastern regions.

Celebrations include a May 18 multicultural performance, featuring Thai boxers, Filipino folksingers and others at the City Playhouse in Thornhill.

The group has asked students from grades 5 to 12 to write mottos or slogans of no more than 15 words for Asian Heritage Month and asked students and adults to draw logos.

Prize winners in both contests will be presented to dignitaries in Ottawa.

Interested residents can call 905-842-8489 for more information.



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