

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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York region contributes \$500,000 to relief fund

Committee agrees to give immediately

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

York Region will send \$500,000 to help those affected by the devastating tsunami in southeast Asia.

Saying relief funds can't wait another two weeks for full council approval, York Region's finance committee agreed Thursday to send the money immediately.

Regional chairperson Bill Fisch conducted an informal telephone poll of council members and received overwhelming support for sending the funds — 75 per cent to the Red Cross and 25 per cent to World Vision Canada.

The money will come from a \$7-million reserve, funds not spent in the 2004 budget.

RESIDENTS DEVASTATED

"York Region residents are devastated by the recent disaster and the continuing sense of despair," Mr. Fisch said. "This is on behalf of all the municipalities and residents of the region and would be an immediate payment."

The money will be forwarded to the most needy areas, according to Carol Law, community services co-ordinator for the Canadian Red Cross.

"There are so many people in the region who have been affected

See DEATHS, page 10.

'CROWD OF HUMAN SUFFERING' GREETED MEDICAL TEAM IN TSUNAMI-RAVAGED COMMUNITIES

York doctors first to Sri Lanka

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

York Region doctors reached the heart of Sri Lanka's disaster zone this week, ahead of other outside help the world has promised.

A medical team led by Dr. Jegapathy Rajendra of Markham was treating refugees around the eastern coastal town of Batticaloa, a district the Sri Lanka government

says has more displaced people than any other.

By Tuesday, foreign aid hadn't reached camps of survivors dotting the countryside in schools, churches and temples.

NO FOREIGN AID

"Up to now, there's none visible," Dr. Rajendra said from Batticaloa Tuesday night.

A "crowd of human suffering" has greeted the nine-member group at each camp, where a third of 1,000 to 1,500 refugees are typically children under 10 and there's no powdered milk for infants, he said.

In a country where it's common for people sleep on mats made from plastic sheets or leaves, many don't have even that, Dr. Rajendra

said. "They don't have a sheet to cover themselves. They don't have a pillow. A pillow is a luxury."

The stories are never-ending: A grandmother who lost her entire family.

A woman of 32 who had five children and saw three taken by waves. An eight-year-old girl whose parents were killed.

See THEY, page 10.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

GRIN AND BEAR IT

Jagjeet Gil of Sexton McKay of Richmond Hill still manages a smile while surveying a property at McCowan and Stouffville roads Thursday while buffeted by snow.

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