

Mother's loss drives her to help other children in need

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

Following the loss of her child from diphtheria, Matilda Haney decided to do something positive. She dedicated herself to supplying clothes and food for children in need. Ms Haney began collecting,

mending, washing and folding clothing that was then shipped to Zambia, Africa.

"She's a missionary at heart," said Mary Pan, who is organizing this weekend's All About Kids Festival with Patty Loveland.

Ms Haney is being honoured at the festival, which began yesterday and ends Sunday, for her work in helping the African people. The net proceeds from the festival will go to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, which aims to ease the pain of HIV and AIDS in Africa.

Music, dance, drummers and an emergency response demonstration will be part of the festival at Markville Shopping Centre as well as a chance to meet cartoon hero SpongeBob SquarePants.

The show, which attracted more than 100,000 people last year, celebrates diversity and children of all ages. This year's theme is heroes in our community, including rescue heroes, everyday heroes and children making differences.

One child being recognized is seven-year-old Aurora resident Clara Reeves, who

raised more than \$1,500 by selling flower and apple seeds. The money was given to the Stephen Lewis AIDS Foundation.

Also being recognized is seven-year-old Paige Pedlar, author and illustrator of *Who Will Cuddle Them When They Sleep?* She sold copies of her handmade book door-to-door to raise money for orphaned children in Africa.

As for Ms Haney, her project to help African children grew. Hundreds of apple cartons were filled and forwarded to various destinations in

Zambia, Angola and Kenya each year. Today, four container loads a year — equivalent to four railway boxcars — are sent to the needy children and families of Africa.

Today, at 89, the Markham resident's work continues. One of her much-loved comments is: "I can't die yet. I still have so much to do."

For the festival's schedule of events, go to <http://www.shop-markville.com> and click on 'events'.

— With files from Alyshia Higgins

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