

# Stouffville man charged as police launch RIDE program

It wasn't good timing for a Whitchurch-Stouffville man.

The media and other dignitaries joined York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge and members of Mothers Against Drinking and Driving at the 2006 festive season enhanced RIDE program kick-off in Markham Tuesday afternoon.

At the same time in Stouffville, members of the force's traffic unit arrested a man who was driving while disqualified as a result of a 2004 impaired driving conviction.

Officers operating an operation disqualified project observed a possible prohibited driver driving a GMC van on the Tenth Line north of Main Street.

They stopped the vehicle and discovered the driver was prohibited from driving for two years as a result of a court order issued in April 2005. It was the second order issued to the man after he breached an original two-year ban after he was convicted in April 2004 of impaired driving.

A 51-year-old man was charged with driving while disqualified, under suspension, without insurance and with unauthorized licence plates.

He was scheduled to appear in court yesterday. His van was seized for 45 days.

This year's festive RIDE program is dedicated to the memory of Steven Nicholas Bobel. Steven, 22, was killed by

a drunk driver in Newmarket in 1992. His mother, Marilyn Bobel, shared her family's story at Tuesday's press conference.

The launch also include a presentation to four York officers who made the most arrests for impaired driving offences in the past year.

A presentation to Chief La Barge by MADD Canada recognized York police for having the most impaired-by-drug arrests in Canada. A York officer is working with the RCMP as its training facilitator for the drug recognition expert program, which trains officers across the province to identify drug-related impairment.

In 2005, the York RIDE program

resulted in 65 impaired driving arrests and 49 drug arrests. In 2006, there have been 49 impaired driving arrests and 15 impaired-by-

drug arrests. Eleven people have been killed where alcohol was a contributing factor.

—Jim Mason



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