



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Jaime Sparks (left) and Marilla Häuselmann prepare for their vehicle collision prediction experiment at a Grade 12 university physics class run by teacher Andy Cherkas at Stouffville District Secondary School.

Stouffville teachers' workshops overflowing at provincial event

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Mr. Cherkas is bullish on the school, beyond the science wing.

"I don't think people in this town really appreciate the teachers this school has had. I hear people taking their children elsewhere to get a better education. In fact, it's the opposite," he said.

He noted math and tech teachers and students win awards and give seminars, too.

"The demand to learn about the hands-on approach to teaching science and some of the unique labs and demos used at SDSS was more than (we) expected," Mr. Cherkas said after the provincial meetings.

The first workshops on biology labs and demonstrations included SDSS teacher Kim Seon's presentation on fad diets

and Steve Jimmo on diversity of living things. Laurie Elgar showed three activities: creating Halloween creatures from genetics, active transport with yeast and Congo red, and using drama to teach photosynthesis and cellular respiration.

The talk was scheduled in a room for 50 participants and at least three times that number tried to attend the session, Mr. Cherkas said.

The second workshop dealing with grades 9 and 10 science attracted a similar number of participants, however, everyone could not be seated in the room.

Mr. Jimmo, Ms Seon, John Dragert, and Magdy Shalaby took the participants through a sequence of labs and demos that included "magic" ultra violet beads, a corrosion and combustion experiment, eco-bottle labs

and locating stars.

By the time the third session came around, the conference committee, alerted to the high demand for the SDSS sessions, had set up a crowd control system.

The third session dealt with chemistry. Mr. Shalaby spoke about solutions and used aluminum foil and copper sulphate to experimentally determine coefficients for chemical equations. Mr. Dragert showed how to determine properties of materials and classify materials according to bond type. Mr. Cherkas spoke on using tie-dye to teach various chemical topics.

The conference committee invited the SDSS science department back for next year's conference to speak in a larger venue and to repeat the sessions to meet the demand for the talks.

Levy has helped hospital, Jaczek notes

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plan that operates health in this province."

The levy also hits those least capable of paying it, said Mr. Shurman, who vowed to support doing away with the premium in the run-up to the Oct. 10 provincial election. "At the end of the day, if you have \$900 in additional income, would that help?" Mr. Shurman said.

But how much lower and middle-income people are charged could be an issue discussed during a review of the tax, Oak Ridges-Markham Liberal MPP Helena Jaczek said.

Although such a review remains a good exercise, the bottom line remains that the government needs the additional cash for services, Dr. Jaczek said.

York Region's growing population will need expanded services.

As an example of how the levy has been used, Markham-Stouffville Hospital received more than \$30 million in new funding since 2003, Dr. Jaczek said.

The hospital received one-time funding to increase key procedures such as hip and knee replacements and to purchase diagnostic imaging equipment.

"What's clear is that we really do need that money for the health care system," she said.

Richmond Hill MPP Reza Moridi also stressed how important cash raised through the levy is to high-growth areas such as York Region, that also have aging populations.

The tax will stay in place regardless of what the results of a review are, Mr. Moridi said.

"In the end, this tax is going to stay," he said. "There's a need for this income."



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From Melissa, Magdi, Nicole and Rubin, thank you and look forward to the new year with all of you and all of our new members! Thank you