

Christmas dinners served in Bolivia, Stouffville by Clements family

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year," he said. "We're very fortunate to get a lot of mixed people; rich, poor, powerful and unpowerful. It's the harmony of the community and everyone coming together."

Besides helping run the dinner in town, Mr Clements is also heavily involved in the the Jennifer Ashleigh Children's Charity, which he started.

GRANDCHILDREN DIED

He began the charity in 1990 after losing two grandchildren, both from Stouffville, to a degenerative muscular illness.

The purpose behind the charity is to give financial support to families with children who are chronically and seriously ill.

The first year the charity operated, it raised and donated \$20,000 to families with sick children. Last year, more than \$1 million was donated.

While he has been involved in many business

ventures in his life, Mr Clements said the best part of any job is the people.

"Everybody can buy product, everybody can get a store location, everybody can get the cheapest price, but who are the people?"

He credits the "great crew" of people for not only helping the charity succeed, but also helping him during his own difficult financial times with his former company, National Sports, in 1994.

"We got back on our feet and sort of solidified our family and through that, Jennifer Ashleigh got stronger, too," he said. "Usually when you get into trouble, people dump you. But that didn't happen in my case and we're so blessed."

He has since sold the retail chain to Forzani Group Ltd.

His eldest son is now the vice-president of National Sports. His three other children, one son and two daughters, are also successful, and two assist with the Christmas dinner each year.

Mr. Clements also has

nine grandchildren, raises and breeds race horses, and just recently released a new sports drink onto the market called Exhilerate.

"I don't manage my time, I just run," he laughed. "Everybody says I go too fast. My wife's a great ally and so are my children and my friends."

'GO TOO FAST'

When he can't get enough of helping people here, Mr. Clements travels to Bolivia with his wife to help in an orphanage, and cook their Christmas dinner.

His wife helps run a spa where children can be bathed and clothed.

"We're just a tiny part of it, and we love it," he said.

Mr Clements said while he gets satisfaction out of helping the needy children, Stouffville could take a few pointers when it comes to participation in the Christmas dinner.

"Over 4,600 people go to the Christmas dinner in Bolivia and we're talking extreme poor," he said. "If they can do that many meals out of one stove and borrowed burners, surely the town of Stouffville can do a little more than we do."

Attendance at last month's dinner in Stouffville was down by 125 from previous years.

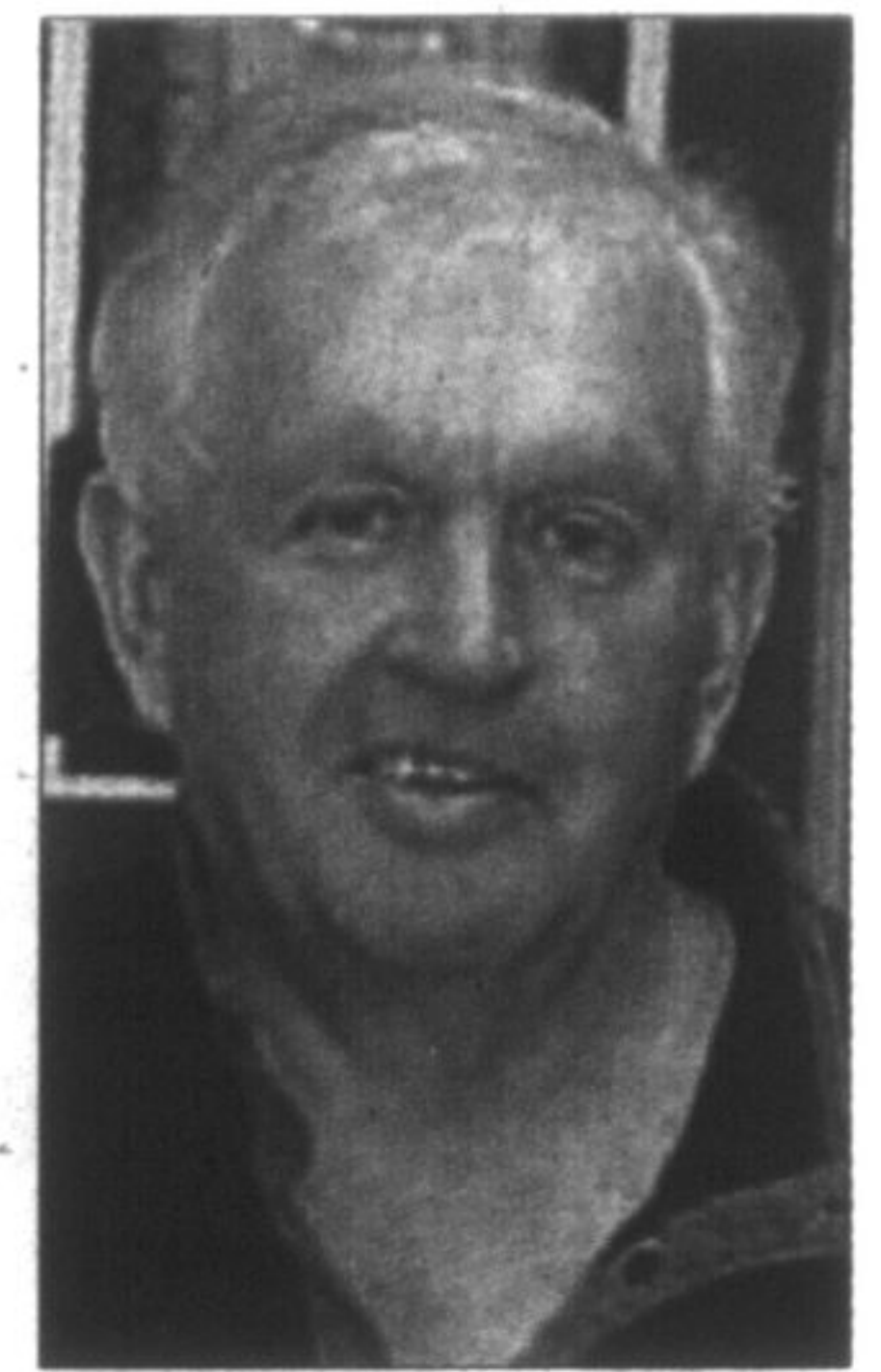
Nevertheless, next year's dinner has already been

given the go-ahead.

More publicity will be done earlier next year to get the message out, that everyone who wants to attend is welcome.

"It's not Norm Clements' dinner, it's not EastRidge Church's dinner, it's a community dinner and we would like more people to get involved with it," he said. "We have the volunteers, we just need the people who want a dinner."

Anyone interested in finding out more about the annual Christmas dinner is asked to call Rev. David Knight (905-852-3534), the Stouffville Country Market (905-640-3813) or any local church.




NORM CLEMENTS: Philanthropist says Stouffville can learn from residents of Bolivia.



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Awards are for the following categories

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 (Individual Award)

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 (Individual Award)

** Winners will be announced at the Business Awards Dinner, April 24, 2008.*

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