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Mother Earth needs another clean-up, Stouffville

Green activities, pool party challenge next Saturday

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

Last year's local Earth Day clean-up produced 1,000 large garbage bags stuffed with trash residents picked up off the streets, sidewalks, lawns and parks.

An entire pick-up truck full of tires and rims, as well as a box spring and mattress were also among the discarded items cleaned up last April.

This year, organizers of the event, which takes place next Saturday, April 25, are hoping to pick up less trash, but have more participants.

1,000 BAGS LAST YEAR

First launched as an environmental awareness event in the United States in 1970, Earth Day, which is officially April 22, is celebrated as the birth of the environmental movement.

In 1990, two million Canadians joined 200 million people in 141 nations in celebrating the first International Earth Day.

Whitchurch-Stouffville launched its own program last year.

"If you throw something on the ground, you just leave it for someone else to clean up," said Micolé Ongman, the town's manager of

recreation in the department of leisure services. "There are a number of receptacles around town, get to know where they are."

Once again, the municipality's Stouffville Reservoir will be the primary clean-up site.

"It can definitely use a clean-up and it's a place people want to go for a nature walk. So you really notice" the trash, Ms Ongman said, noting they will also do tree planting at the reservoir.

Also at the reservoir, on Millard Street east of Ninth Line, this year will be a 'green' display area for people to get information on active transportation and other ways residents can be environmentally-friendly. Participants will also be able to build a birdhouse.

People looking for a new outdoor activity will be able to try urban polling, which is fitness walking with poles.

"By using the poles you get the upper body moving ... (and) it doesn't matter how old you are. People love it," Ms Ongman said.

Africycle, which is an Uxbridge-based organization that refurbishes old bikes and sends them to Malawi, will also be on hand to collect bicycles. Africans use them as catalysts for sustainable and effective development, thus breaking the cycle of poverty.

"We may find bikes in the clean-up, but we're also asking for people to bring old bikes to the reservoir," Ms Ongman said.

The reservoir is not the only

place in need of a clean-up. Schools and residential neighbourhoods could also use one.

In an effort to get more neighbourhood groups participating — there were six last year — all registered clean up groups will be entered into a draw for a free pool party at the Lebovic Leisure Centre.

The town's youth are also being encouraged to form their own neighbourhood clean-up groups or join Love Stouffville, which is comprised of area youth church groups.

CHURCH YOUTH GROUPS

"It's very important for them to take ownership of the community they live in," said Scott Clubine, youth pastor at EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church. "We often hear a lot of negative stuff about young people, but this is a way to show ... there are good kids in our neighbourhoods."

The reservoir clean-up will take place next Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine.

Gloves and garbage bags will be supplied to everyone at the reservoir, as well as to registered clean up groups. Pick up of all collected trash will also be provided.

To register a team, call Scott Clubine at 905-640-3911 ext. 22 or e-mail youth@eastridge.ca

Bikes for Africycle can be brought to EastRidge church, on Tenth Line north of Main Street, anytime next week.

It's easy being green during, after Earth Day

Tips from earthday.ca:

- **Loose the Weight:** Don't carry heavy loads in the car when unnecessary. The weight of a car affects your fuel consumption.
- **Roll Down Your Windows:** Operating a car's A/C in hot weather can increase fuel consumption by more than 20 per cent in urban city driving. Roll down that window and minimize your use of the A/C.
- **Freeze on Farmers Markets:** Don't stop going to the farmers market. Freeze or preserve local produce when it is abundant and affordable and bring the farmers market to your kitchen year round.
- **Organic Foods:** Organic foods are produced in better growing conditions that are mindful of environmental and personal health. Wherever possible, buy local and buy organic.
- **Grasscycling:** Let the grass grow longer before you cut it and start grasscycling — the practice of leaving grass clippings on the lawn after mowing. The clippings will dehydrate then decompose on your lawn, returning nutrients to the soil, nature's recycling method.

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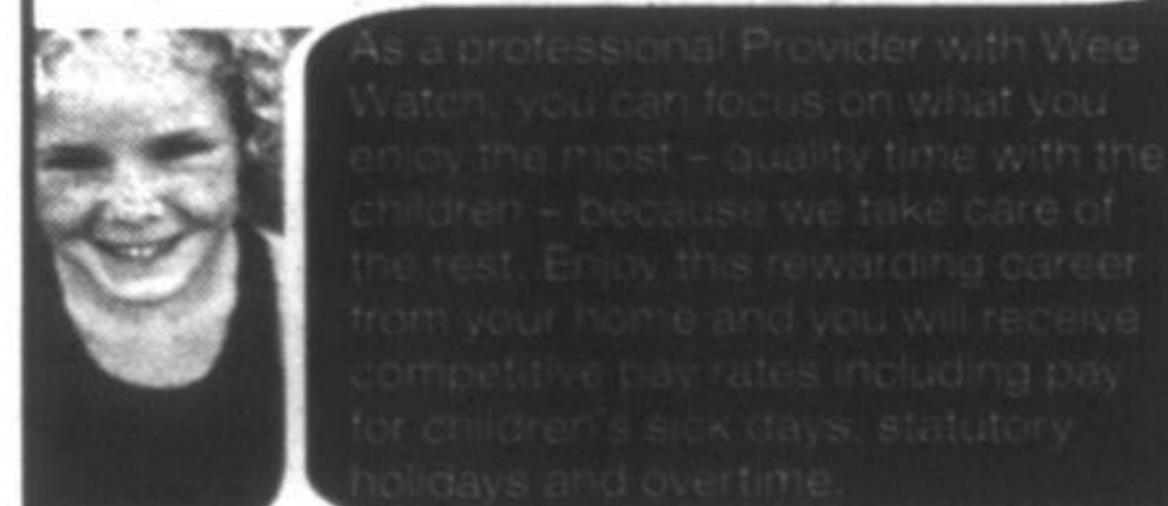
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