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Homeless photograph their lives for show

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

For many York Region residents a park represents fun and frivolity and tents are part of a 'roughing it' weekend, while alleyways and abandoned buildings are to be avoided and portable toilets are for construction workers and emergencies only.

But for other York Region residents, they call these places home.

"Things are not always as they seem," said Jane Wedlock, executive director, community strategist for the York Region Alliance to End Homelessness. "Just because you don't see it, doesn't mean it doesn't exist."

Since 2001, the number of men, women and children living at or below the poverty line in the region has grown to 13 per cent, according to 2008 statistics from the alliance.

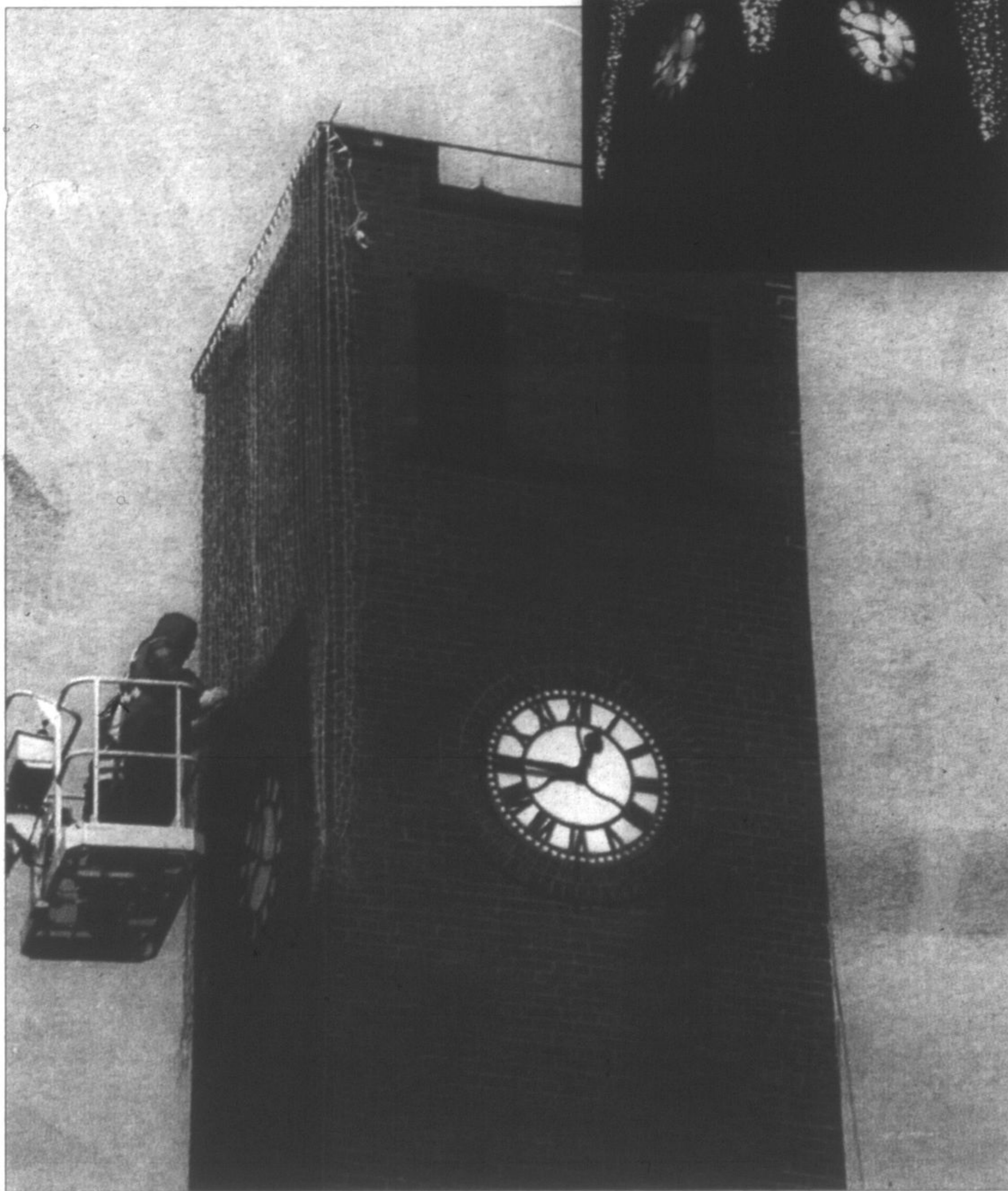
In an effort to bring the region's homelessness problem out of hiding, the alliance created the Photovoice project, which has resulted in the exhibition Hidden in Plain Site: Living Homeless in York Region. The exhibition runs from Jan. 9 to Feb. 13 at Latham Gallery in downtown Stouffville.

"Art is a very powerful medium

See **POWERFUL**, page 5.

NIGHT LIGHT

Tom Price and Brendan Williams of Blachere Illumination drape the top of downtown Stouffville's clock tower with 10,000 LED lights Wednesday. Part of the \$25,000 cost was paid for with donations. The energy-efficient lights will cost less than \$5 to power for the year. The project was completed on New Year's Eve.



STAFF PHOTOS/JIM MASON

Rate hike irks sports groups

Adult hockey costs up 23%,
thanks to rental costs, HST

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

Stouffville puckheads, skaters, softballers and soccer players are all crying foul and want a time out.

Come next season, the town will impose new user fees that, in some cases, will double the per person cost of playing on municipal property.

If that weren't enough to force some organizations into raising their registration fees, the harmonized sales tax (HST), which takes effect July 1, will.

"The town's bumping rates by 14 per cent for the adult league and then on top of that, you end up with an eight-per-cent HST increase," said Paul Dermody, president of the Stouffville Amateur Hockey League. "We're looking at a 23-per-cent hike in our cost."

The HST is a blending of the PST (eight per cent) and GST (five per cent), which will be levied on all items purchased. Currently, not-for-profit organizations, like hockey leagues and soccer clubs, only charge the GST.

"We're aware (of the HST), but it can't be a driving factor for us," said Rob Raycroft, director of leisure services for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. "Our fees still have to reflect our operating costs."

The cost to rent ice in Stouffville, whether it be at the Stouffville Arena or the soon-to-open Clippers Sports Complex, will go from

See **OUT-OF-TOWN**, page 3.

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