

RECREATION: 'Get away from the computer'

Bang drums, swing like monkeys in new town programs

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

Latin dancing, family yoga, hand drumming and a different twist on gymnastics are just some of the new programs being offered by the town this spring and summer.

"I think it's important to introduce a couple of programs every year," said Jen McEachen, recreation programmer for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. "Just so there's more variety in the programming."

A one-day summer workshop last year

proved to be so successful, the town is offering a 10-week hand drumming course for children five years and older.

"Kids are natural music makers," said instructor Shara Claire. "Drumming is a wonderful way to feel the openness between a group of people while expressing their individuality."

The course is taught on West African djembe drums, which are shaped like large goblets.

The course explores basic hand drumming techniques, as well as creative improv, body

percussion, rhythm games, dance and stories about the drum.

"I'm a non-culturally-specific teacher, who happens to use djembes," said Ms Claire, who fell in love with West African hand drumming at age 14 when a kids' drumming program was offered at her British Columbia elementary school.

"I was completely hooked ... I felt like I had found a real niche for me. It was an instant connection."

No musical experience is required and all drums are provided by Ms Claire.

Another new program being offered this spring is Monkeynastix, which combines creativity with music and story telling, flexibility, balance, strength, agility and body awareness.

"It's a different perspective on gymnastics," Ms McEachen said.

Monkeynastix was created in 1995 by Dirk Cilliers, a former South African Olympic-level gymnast in Johannesburg, South Africa as a gymnastics and movement education program for children aged one to six.

The program was introduced to Canadians last year by Jennifer and Hendry Van der Wath who came across the program many years ago while they were living in South Africa.

"We want kids to move," said Vanessa MacDonald, the head instructor and local franchise Monkeynastix franchise owner. Ms MacDonald co-owns the company with her sister Christina Batty. "We want kids to get away from the computer."

Monkeynastix is a structure program with a curriculum. While the program is designed to encourage children to do their best, it is not competitive.

"It gives them self-confidence at their fitness level ... they're always successful," Ms MacDonald said. "We'll be challenging the seven and eight year olds a little differently than the three and four year olds."

There are various age group programs, which build upon each other, for kids aged one to eight.

"Hopefully, when they're done at eight years old, they'll go into a specific sport," Ms MacDonald said.

Registration for all spring, summer, speciality and fitness programs started Feb. 23.

Registration forms are accepted online at www.townofws.com, click on the WSPLAY...Online link from the 'leisure' tab, in person at the Lebovic Leisure Centre, 30 Burkholder St. or by mail to Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, 37 Sandiford Dr., 4th Floor, Stouffville, Ont. L4A 7X5.

LONGMAN'S MARKHAM KIA
NOW OPEN READY TO SERVE YOU



MARCH OIL CHANGE
From **\$24.99***

MARCH DETAILING SPECIAL
From **\$69.99***

10% OFF* ACCESSORIES
with installation

*Offers Expire March 31/10

LONGMAN'S MARKHAM KIA
5396 Hwy. 7, Markham

1-877-803-1795 KIA KIA MOTORS
The Power to Surprise



You can learn to hand drum in Stouffville through a program offered by the town.

YRT STOPS RUNNING

Introducing RideNow real-time bus updates. Ask us when your bus is due and YRT/Viva real-time technology tells you, now. So you'll know exactly when to be there. Get your RideNow updates by email, online or over the phone. Stop running for your bus and ride now.

YRT/Viva introduces real-time transit information. YRT/Viva offers you the benefit of knowing when your bus is due and when to get on. This is a real-time service that allows you to know exactly when your bus is due and when to get on. This is a real-time service that allows you to know exactly when your bus is due and when to get on.

YORK REGION TRANSIT **VIVA**
Better, brighter, righter.