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DOWNTOWN DREAMS

Anna Rose wants to make downtown Stouffville a gathering place, starting with the Farmers' Market.

"(I want to) take that opportunity to build on it by inviting local performers and artists to come out Thursday nights. That way residents and visitors will make a day of it - stay awhile," said the Downtown Stouffville Working Group's new co-ordinator.

"If we can build upon some of the things that are already working, it can make for the (businesses) opening other days or extending their hours."

New business leaders have lots in common

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Whitchurch-Stouffville has two new leaders. Anna Rose is the Downtown Stouffville Working Group's co-ordinator and Mardi Taylor is the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce's new executive director. Both women started March 8 and have offices in the Main Street train station.

"We're so pleased to be neighbours. There's just a natural fit there," said Ms Taylor, who replaces Helene Johnson, who after 22 years with the chamber, 11 as its president and CEO retired earlier this year.

"Helene needs to be recognized and thanked for all of her hard work with the chamber," Ms Taylor said. "It's fairly daunting taking over for someone who has that depth of knowledge, but having said that, I welcome the challenge."

Ms Taylor is no stranger to working in challenging circumstances. Prior to taking the chamber position, Ms Taylor was an executive director of a social service organization in Sudbury that worked with the homeless.

Ms Taylor also spent six years as the Holland River unit manager for the Canadian Cancer Society and was an aquatic facility's manager for the City of Vaughan.

"Managing a chamber, managing an agency - you're dealing with much of the same concerns," she said.

The chamber offers a wide array of programs to its members, including access to employee benefits, a discount program and numerous networking opportunities.

"We act as a resource," Ms Taylor said.

The chamber has about 275 members and is adding members monthly. Although the chamber is growing and its programs have been well received, Ms Taylor acknowledges there is the potential to offer even more.

"Any organization is only as strong as its members, so I'm really excited to meet with them to find out what they expect from the chamber," she said.

Ms Rose is also anxious to hear what local businesses have to say, particularly those in the downtown.

CHAMBER ADDING MEMBERS

"This is a community project, not me by myself or the community group," she said.

Prior to taking this position, Ms Rose was the community relations manager for the Town of Markham.

The Downtown Stouffville Working Group, which is operated by the town, replaced the now-defunct Stouffville Business Improvement Area on Jan. 1

Not only did the organization overseeing the downtown businesses change, but so too did its boundaries. Downtown Stouffville now officially includes businesses on Main Street, as well as north and south of it between St. James Presbyterian Church and the Ninth Line.

"Accountability I think will be the No. 1 biggest change," Ms Rose said. "And I really hope the residents and people of Stouffville will take advantage of me and my connection to the town."

Ms Rose also wants to better connect the downtown residents to the merchants.

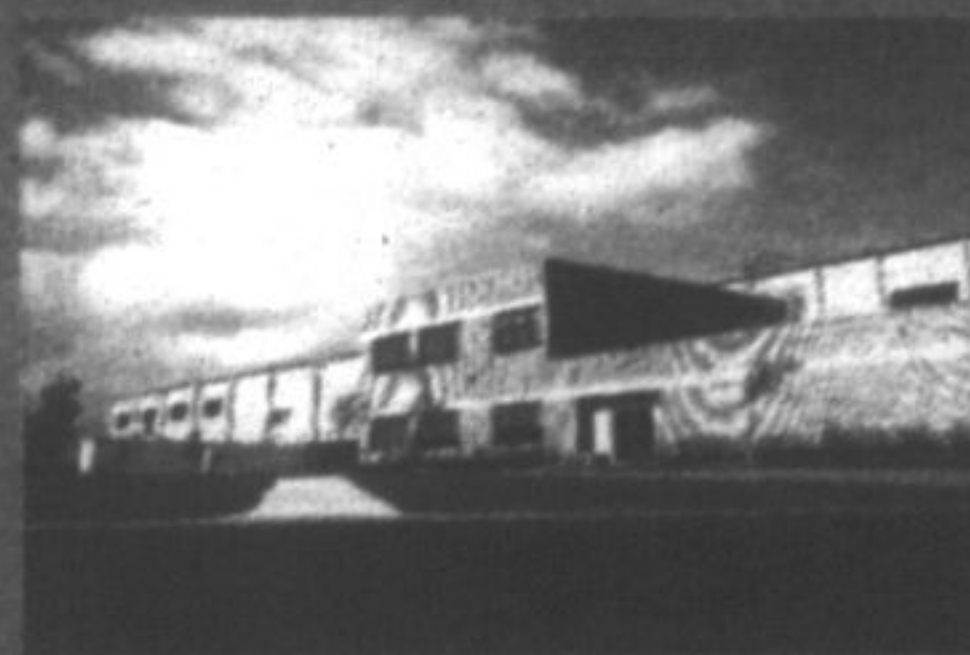
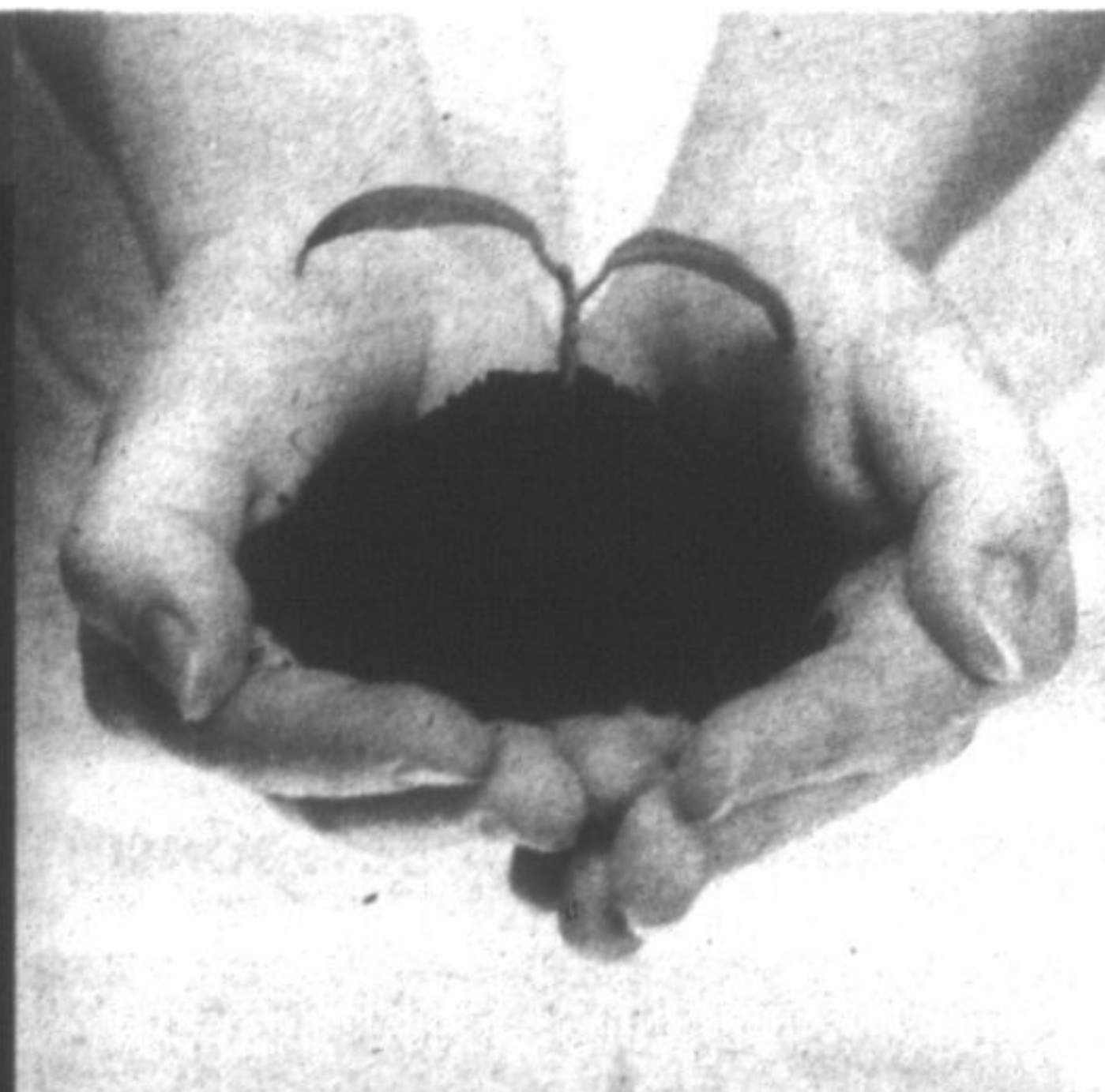
"Because the downtown is in such a residential area, the opportunity to embrace the community is incredible," she said. "The main street has got one-up on many other communities because it's already being utilized, it just needs to result in dollars for the merchants."

For more on the downtown group, contact Anna Rose at 905-640-0749. For more on the chamber, contact Mardi Taylor at 905 642-4227.

York Region Composting Seminars

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Saturday, May 1, 2010

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

York Region Waste Management Centre
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Town of East Gwillimbury

Three free Composting seminars are available.

Hosted by Cathy Nesbitt of Cathy's Crawly Composters

- Backyard Composting 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
- Vermicomposting (composting with worms) 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
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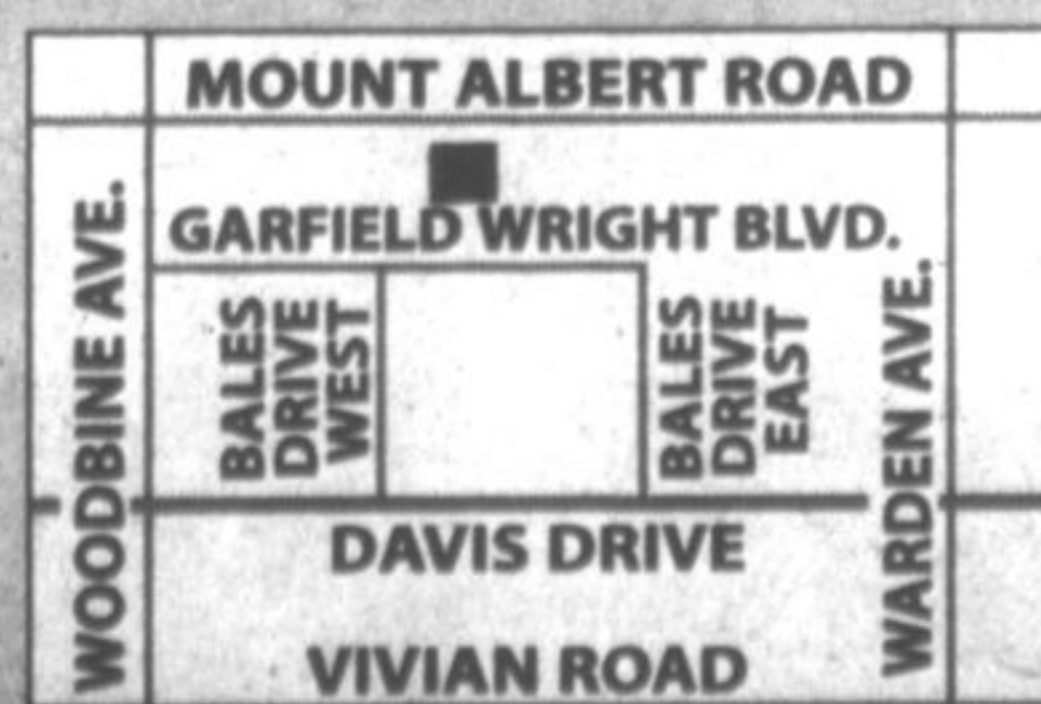
York Region

E V E N T L O C A T I O N

York Region Waste Management Centre
100 Garfield Wright Boulevard,
Town of East Gwillimbury

EVENT HOURS:

Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.



For more information, please contact York Region at 905-830-4444 ext. 5089 or visit www.york.ca/waste



The MS Society of Canada would like to thank everyone who participated in the 2010 MS Walk. Your continued efforts and support helped raise over \$5.1 million in the movement to end MS.

www.mswalks.ca

The York East Chapter would especially like to thank all the volunteers, sponsors, donors and participants for your generosity and support in continuing to make the MS Walk a success!

