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POLICY**

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Ten years of rescuing youths

As we prepare to fire up the barbecue, throw the steaks on the grill and kick back to celebrate Canada Day with family and friends, it's a good time to remember there are people in our community who are not so fortunate.

Just across town Tuesday, a celebration of a different kind was held in honour of the 10th anniversary of Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region. This agency provides our neighbourhood's at-risk youth and young families with much needed support so they can make better choices and get their lives back on track.

Thousands of young people, for instance, have turned up on the doorstep of drop-in centre Pathways Home Base since it opened 10 years ago, as reported in today's paper.

Many of them were in crisis of one sort or another, desperately needing food, clothing, counselling for addictions and guidance. These youth had somehow managed to lose their way. They needed a place to lay their head for the night. They needed a place to call home for a while. And they found it.

One of Pathways former clients — and there are about 700 annually — turned to the centre after his release from prison. At 22, he was on the street and looking for work, but nobody would hire him.

Volunteers at Pathways provided him a fountain of help. Today, he is gaining social service experience as a volunteer at the centre. He even wrote a youth program manual that is lauded by centre staff.

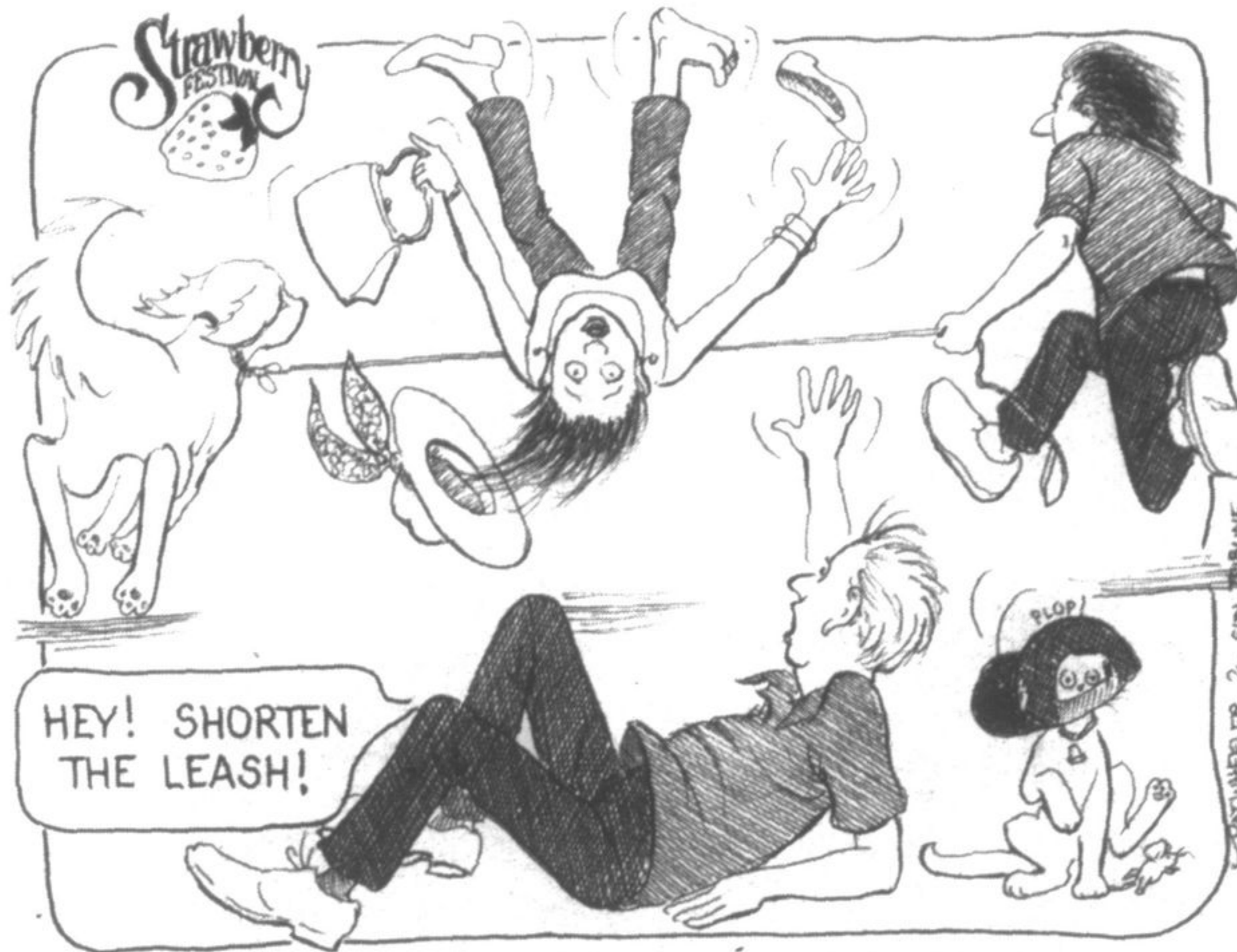
In his own words, the young man says, "They helped me create opportunities. They helped me learn a lot about myself. Without them, I'd be nothing."

Some teenagers who found a sense of purpose at the centre return again and again because of the positive environment. One young man is making a return to school this fall to take part in an electrician apprenticeship program. He says, "When I was 18, I was really down and out. I come from a broken family and Pathways has given me a lot of support over the years."

There's often a fine line between doing well and running off the tracks, particularly for some young people who are struggling to find their place in this world.

Sure, the majority of our young people are doing OK, but it's the stellar work of volunteers at a facility such as Pathways that catches them when they're not.

Pathways staff embody the Canadian spirit of sharing and caring. We can't think of anything better to celebrate than that on Canada Day.



## Letters to the Editor

### Thanks for exposing faults

*Re: Situation Critical: the crisis in long-term care series, July 17 to 26.*

As a personal support worker, I need to address some of the comments made in your series. I do not work in a long-term care facility but in home care.

I agree there needs to be a common curriculum for all PSWs. It is the responsibility of the facility, agency or hospital to make sure the PSWs they hire have the proper credentials and training. The others just make the rest of us look bad.

Regarding training in mental health, a proper PSW program will cover that and also proper techniques for transferring clients.

My company offers extra training in various areas and if we would like to learn more about a certain topic, they do their best to comply.

If we have any concerns regarding transferring a client, they will come out to make sure it is done safely.

Where I really have issue with your series is accounts regarding abusive PSWs.

I have heard stories of abusive nurses from my clients and have also witnessed such abuse. I saw a nurse verbally abusing one of my clients and also putting her in a dangerous situation by administering a drug incorrectly, totally disregarding my concerns.

That nurse was fired, I made sure everyone who should have known about this incident did and action was taken. Every profession has a few bad apples. Hopefully, they can be weeded out. Abuse should never be dealt with by a slap on the wrist.

We know our role in health care is different from a RN, but we are part of the team and for that team to work we have to have respect for each member. Our goal is the same, to provide the best

patient care possible.

Thank you to the York Region Media Group for making us more aware of this through this series.

T. ALLEN  
RICHMOND HILL

### Serious reforms needed in our nursing homes

*Re: Situation Critical series, with copies to MP Peter Kent, MPP Peter Shurman and Older Women's Network.*

Thanks to Metroland for the exposé on the dismal performance of nursing homes for seniors. As Canadian citizens, we must press for serious reform. Excuses about inadequate staffing ring hollow, from homes and hospitals.

Taking my cue from the G20 summit last weekend, I strongly suggest the following to make life better for seniors and to challenge the low standards institutions have for disabled seniors.

1. Regulations must be enforced.
2. Institutional "thinking" style must be changed, so that they have no choice but to honour their commitments.

3. Objectives, discussions and compliance must be enforced under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and seniors' advocacy groups.

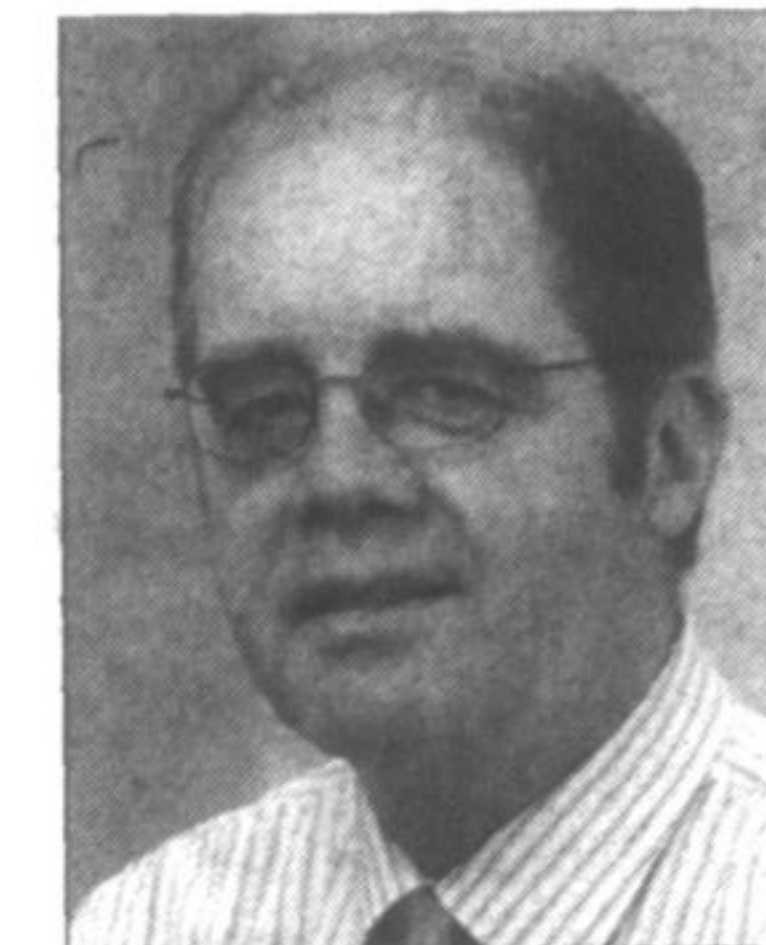
4. A regular peer review process, including individual concerned seniors, must be put in place.

5. Accountability must be followed under the supervision of the above.

Finally, low expectations of deadwood administrators and staff must be replaced by those who wish to serve well. The public good can never be compromised.

The answer is not new money but the replacement of superfluous staff with those who will do the job credit.

HANNAH CARDACI  
THORNHILL



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Your Canada Day networking assignment

I've been lucky enough to take in fireworks shows during New Year's Eve over the skyline of Florence, Italy and on July 4 over the Atlantic from Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Both were massive displays in such memorable settings.

Still, there's no place I'd rather soak in some pyrotechnics than Stouffville Memorial Park tonight.

Honest.

The light show is always solid and the weather almost always peachy. The setting is small town Ontario at its best, even without the hill in Thicketwood Park and the parkland across the street looking more war zone than fun zone.

But it's the social side of Canada Day night that sells it. Tip-toe around the lawnchairs and blankets and you're bound to meet a former neighbour or someone with whom you played slo-pitch or went to school. You tell each other you haven't changed a bit, exchange phone numbers and play catch-up.

Look around tonight and see it happening throughout the park. It's that friendliness that drew so many of us here in the first place.

It's also a chance to meet your new neighbours, some of the fine folks who scooped up the hundreds of homes built here during the last five years.

Introduce yourself, talk about your community and make new friends. Invite them to join your hockey league, service club or church. Be an ambassador for Whitechurch-Stouffville. Call it holiday weekend networking.

Dig into a sweet piece of Canada Day cake, listen to the blues band belt out a favourite and toast the opening of the Strawberry Festival.

See you there, Stouffville.  
Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.