

OSPACA staff face death threats

BY AMANDA PERSICO
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For one staff member at the OSPCA in northwestern Whitchurch-Stouffville, being labelled a murderer is a hard pill to swallow.

"I'm constantly looking over my shoulder," said the woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "I'm worried about my safety. Not only at work, but when I go to Harvey's or Wendy's to grab something to eat or when I go to the drug store to pick up something."

Since the ringworm outbreak, the staff member and her family have been targeted and threatened by residents and protesters. She has even been likened to Hitler.

One of the numerous and constant threats she receives is a photograph of her licence plate, boasting people know where she lives and can kill her just as she helped kill the animals.

"It was intimidation tactics," OSPCA spokesperson Alison Cross said of the incident.

Many of the threats were left anonymously via telephone message or e-mail.

And they were not for the faint of heart. One threat, addressed to veterinarians working in the shelter reads, "Many people want to hurt you. This

will come back to haunt you. Be very concerned when you get into your car. This is not a threat, it's a promise."

York Regional Police investigated one death threat reported in May and closed the case with no charges laid, Const. Rebecca Boyd said.

"We, in the building, all love animals as much as they do, outside the building," the staff member said. "People who work here are very serious about animal welfare."

"If only people knew how much we love animals. Being called a murderer is the most hurtful thing to say. We didn't stick it out because we hate animals. We stuck it out because we love animals."

The number of threats was decreasing, but spiked after the OSPCA announced an adoption blitz for cats that tested negative twice for ringworm.

The onslaught of threats forced the OSPCA to cancel the blitz and send out the animals to other shelters for adoption.

The spike in threats was shocking to staff members working to clean the facility and find homes for animals.

"They profess to love animals, but why are they blocking efforts to re-home them," the OSPCA staff member said. "Protesters interfered with finding these animals a new home. No one can understand this reaction."

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| TUESDAY JULY 6 | VISION, HEARING HELP
A CNIB Lions low vision clinic and a Canadian Hearing Society hearing clinic will be held at Parkview Village's Boardroom, 12184 Ninth Line, from 10 a.m. to 1 pm. Call 1-800-563-0887. |
| THURSDAY JULY 1 | FESTIVAL FUN
The Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry Festival opens today with free cake, music and fireworks. For more information, go to strawberryfestival.ca |
| THURSDAY JULY 1 | BIG BBQ
Stouffville Lions hold their annual beef barbecue in Memorial Park from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tickets at the door. |
| THURSDAY JULY 8 | JAZZY JOE
Jazz giant Joe Sealy plays Nineteen on the Park as part of the three-part Piano Series at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25 at the door. Go to www.joesealy.com or call 905-640-2322. |
| FRIDAY JULY 2 | FESTIVE CARDS
Silver Jubilee Club for Seniors, Main and Market streets, hosts bid euchre, bridge and regular euchre at 1 p.m. Strawberry short-cake served. Admission \$2. All seniors are welcome. |
| SATURDAY JULY 10 | CHOO, CHOO
Richmond Hill Live Steamers, a non-profit mini train club is open to the public July 10 and 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Location is 15922 McCowan Rd, 2 km north of Aurora Road. |
| SUNDAY JULY 4 | SWEET RIDES
Stouffville Country Market, Tenth Line north of Main Street, hosts car shows July 4 and 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rain date is July 11. Presented by Road Legends Cruises. |

For more community events, visit yorkregion.com and click on POP personal online planner.

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