

PEOPLE: Mennonite exchange program visitors work, live in Stouffville

World comes to town

BY ALLAN REESOR-MCDOWELL

Stouffville has changed a lot over the last decade – with so many new homes it is not surprising to see so many new faces in our community.

One new face that many of you have likely come across over the last year is that of Daniel Corcelli, a full-time volunteer with the Care and Share Thrift Shop on Main Street.

Mr. Corcelli, from Recife, Brazil, is a participant in the International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP), a vocational and cultural exchange program that brings young adults from 20 countries to Canada and the United States to spend one year living with host families and working with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) or partner organizations.

The program aims to strengthen bonds of Christian fellowship, promote international peace and understanding and help participants gain vocational skills, among other goals.

In Brazil, Mr. Corcelli is enrolled in a university program in administration and works as a salesperson, selling coffee wholesale to retail outlets and supermarkets. He brought this business and customer service experience to his work placement at the Care and Share where, in his words, "every day is just great fun".

Mr. Corcelli arrived last August with some apprehensions about coming to Canada because it is so different from Brazil and this was his first time away from home. But he has found his experience to be "wonderful."

"This year has been very important in my life, where I could share with people from another culture," he said.

Another participant in MCC's IVEP program in Stouffville is Pheakdey Tim, of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Before coming to Canada, Mr. Tim worked as a project manager at a centre for vulnerable children called Cambodia's Children at Risk. He is also a student at the Pannasastra University of Cambodia, where he has completed three years of his Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in



Daniel Corcelli of Brazil and Pheakdey Tim of Cambodia tried hockey and other Canadian traditions during their time on exchange in Stouffville this year.

International Relations.

In Stouffville, Mr. Tim worked with the school, camp and outdoor education programs at Willowgrove, an organization based on 100 acres on McCowan Road just south of Main Street.

Stouffville will welcome three new IVEPers from Laos, Zambia and Zimbabwe for another year in August.

"I like working with kids a lot," says Mr. Tim, who spent most of his time in the classroom. "I was able to share about my culture and language with them. They really appreciated my time and investment in their kids' life."

"It is such a great opportunity to come to Canada and learn more about its culture, way of thinking and lifestyle. And through helping in the classroom, as the teacher's assistant, I have learned a lot – skills of teaching kids and, of course, I have improved my English."

Host families are an integral part of the IVEP program. By welcoming IVEP participants into their homes, hosts help them integrate into a Canadian family, community and church life in significant ways. While IVEPers spend much of their time volunteering at their work

placements, they often say the connections with people they live and work with are what they take with them when they return to their home communities, which was the case for both Mr. Corcelli and Mr. Tim.

"I am so thankful to God that I have Bob and Sheryl Wideman as my host family," Mr. Tim said. "They are very understandable persons. They were open to learning about my culture. They also care and support me as their son. When I had surgery they looked after me very well."

Mr. Corcelli, too, has fond memories of spending time with his hosts, Ron and Sonya DeRoo and family.

"We have had very special, joyful times together," he said, "like going camping."

Mr. Corcelli and Mr. Tim return home this month.

"The people in Stouffville are very nice and friendly," Mr. Tim said, "they would always say hi to me when I was riding my bicycle on the road."

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If you are interested in learning more about IVEP, MCC, or hosting an IVEP participant for six to 11 months go to ivep.mcc.org or call 416-832-0211.

Stouffville's Allan Reesor-McDowell is MCC's IVEP co-ordinator at its Ontario offices in Toronto.

Hospital beating ER target

BY L.H. TIFFANY HSIEH
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Markham Stouffville Hospital is hitting over its target in reducing ER wait times, thanks to a provincial funding program.

Since 2008, the province's Pay for Results program has helped participating hospitals lower overall wait times by 4.7 hours (28 per cent) for patients who require complex medical care or admission to hospital and by 1.4 hours (22 per cent) for patients with minor conditions.

This year, through a \$100-million investment announced this week, the province is expanding the program to bring the total number of participating hospitals to 71.

This is Markham Stouffville's second year in the program and "if we don't improve at the end of the year, that funding will be removed," said Sandy Marangos, the hospital's clinical director of mental health and emergency services.

While the hospital received about \$700,000 last year, it received about \$600,000 with variable funding based on performance this year.

Last year, Markham Stouffville saw 57,000 ER patients. With funding made available only halfway through the year, the hospital managed to maintain its wait time from previous years.

The hospital needs to meet a 9-per-cent target in the program. Unofficial data for the first quarter of this year indicates it has been admitting patients to inpatient beds within eight hours of triage, which is above the target.

With the funding, Ms Marangos said the hospital was able to hire four patient-flow co-ordinators to concentrate on discharge planning and three bed-flow co-ordinators to move patients from the ER department to an empty bed.

As well, Markham Stouffville is piloting a physician-nurse triage team.

"It's like having a doctor right at triage," Ms Marangos said. "We bring the doctor right to the patient at triage, supported by a nurse who carries out any orders, so we can shorten the length of day for patients. Whether they are admitted or not, they get seen by a doctor."

On average, Ms Marangos said the hospital receives just shy of 5,000 ER visits a month.

What's the usual cause for slow wait times at a hospital?

"Beds," she said. "In all hospitals around here we have a certain percentage of patients that are in beds that no longer need acute care, but are waiting for long-term care placement and there just isn't the access to the beds."

A \$400-million redevelopment will see the hospital double its capacity by 2014.

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