

FAREWELL TO CHIEF

York Region Police Chief Armand La Barge (left) talks with Stouffville Lions Joe Cote and Sharon McClenny at Latcham Hall last week. The chief, who is retiring in December after 37 years with the York force, was honoured by the service club during a dinner meeting.



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

UNITED WAY: Campaign at 25% of record goal Strength investments program unveiled

BY CHRIS TRABER
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The third annual United Way of York Region Week launched on an positive note Monday with attendees learning the 2010 campaign is already at 25 per cent of its record \$8 million goal.

Host organization Toromont Cat's massive excavating machines served as a fitting backdrop on the chilly Vaughan morning as United Way officials ran with the digging metaphor.

In tandem with campaign director Rickesh Lakhani's announcement the current campaign has reached the \$2-million mark, board vice-chairperson Helen Murray unveiled the inaugural United Way strength investments program, a yearly \$150,000 pool to help volunteer groups and individuals make a difference in their communities.

"The single defining issue of our region is the intersection of pace, face and places of growth and our ability to support people, families and neighbourhoods," she said. "This means our funding must extend beyond the formal agencies, programs and services United Way traditionally funds. This means digging deeper."

The program is an opportunity for established and informal volunteer organizations to put forward ideas, strategies and action plans addressing needs and issues in our communities, Ms Murray said.

The program will support projects that bring residents, communities, businesses, agencies and faith groups together to work on simple and collaborative responses to complex social issues and clearly show positive results.

United Way will soon hold a series of regionwide community information meetings for those interested in applying for funding. The first approved strength investments will be announced early next year.

"United Way is digging deeper,

investing in the very rich fabric that makes our neighbourhoods, communities and region great," United Way chief executive officer Daniele Zanotti said. "Strength investments will be a unique stream, the cornerstone of funding going forward."

"Research shows you can't just fund need. You also have to invest in what's going on in communities already."

York Region Alliance To End Homelessness executive director Jane Wedlock lauded the program.

"It's an important new direction for United Way," she said. "It recognizes collaborative initiatives."

United Way represents the most meaningful and hands-on method for employees to give back to the community, Toromont Cat president Scott Medhurst said. Staff at the company has raised \$500,000 since 2006. In addition to providing the forum, the company was title sponsor of the United Way Dragon Boat Festival.

"United Way's on the ground where it's needed, building solutions," he said. "We can all make a difference by taking partnership to a different level. It's a win-win."

The kick off to United Way week featured the first of two historic announcements, the second, in partnership with York University, was unveiled, community campaign chairperson and York Region Media Group publisher Ian Proudfoot noted.

"United Way is not resting on its already affirming laurels (with) record annual campaigns and an investment of more than \$5 million in local programs and services in 2010," he said. "Strength investments funding is one of two game-changing announcements planned for the week. Both set to transform our United Way and, potentially, our region."

For more information on the campaign, go to: unitedwayofyorkregion.com



Free The Pooch Stouffville Dog Owners Association

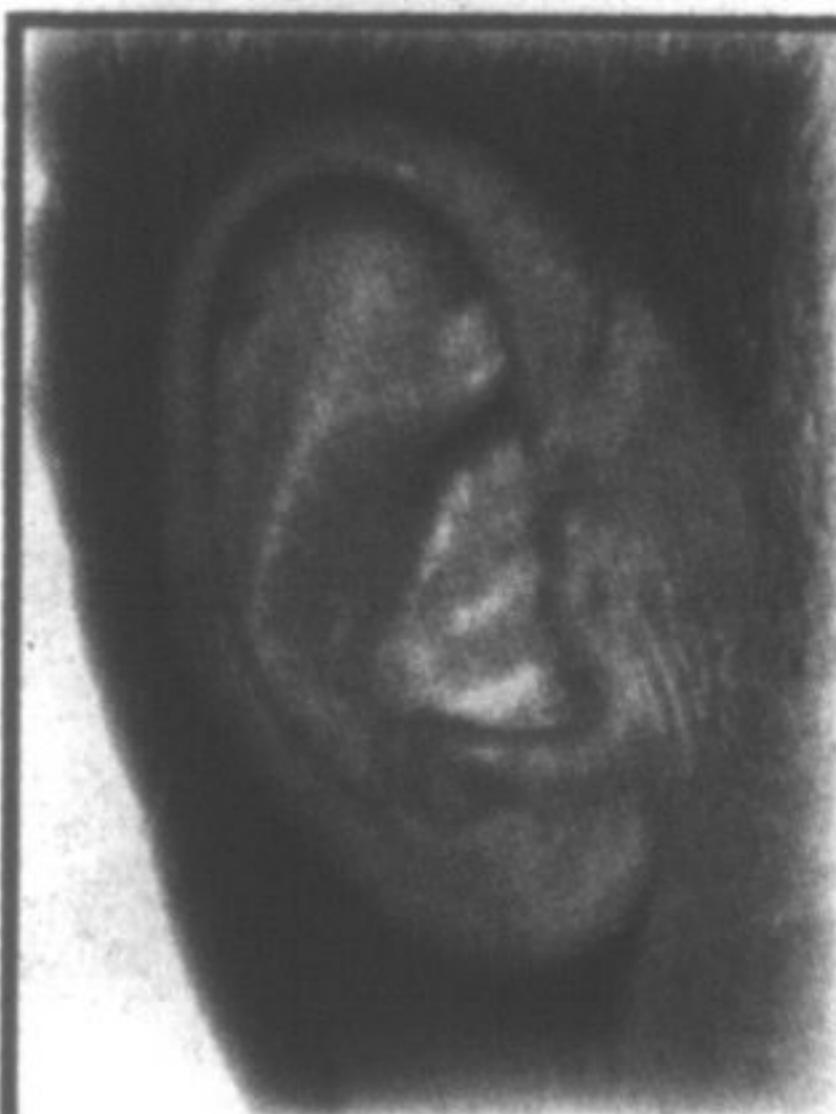
The Stouffville Dog Owners' Association would like to thank the following businesses for their support during the opening of the Stouffville Dog Park:

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The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Giant Tiger
The Earl of Whitchurch
Country Style Donuts
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Boston Pizza
The Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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