

GET A JOB?

Teenagers doing one better, starting own summer companies

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Matthew Eeuwes loves to perform. So much so, he plans on going to university for music performance.

But before he does that, the 17-year-old Stouffville resident is spending the summer operating his own performance and music lesson company, Sensational Strings.

Mr. Eeuwes is one of 23 York Region students participating in the Summer Company program, which provides hands-on business coaching and start-up money for young entrepreneurs.

"It's to promote entrepreneurship in youth, which will ultimately, we hope, lead to the creation of jobs," said Doug Lindeblom, director of economic strategy and tourism for York Region.

Successful applicants receive \$1,500 in start-up money and another \$1,500 upon completion of the program.

The program is operated through the York Small Business Enterprise Support Centre.

"We really see this as important to the regional economy," Mr. Lindeblom said.

The program is open to students aged 15 to 29. The applicant must propose a new business idea and be prepared to work at least 35 hours a week for a minimum of eight consecutive weeks, if in high school, or 12 consecutive weeks if attending a post-secondary institution. The program ends Labour Day.

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another \$1,500 upon completion of the program.

Sensational Strings provides semi-formal to formal music entertainment. The violinist is available to perform at weddings, funerals and corporate functions.

Mr. Eeuwes, who recently graduated from the arts program at Unionville High School, got the idea to run a company for the summer from his sister Michelle.

Ms Eeuwes, through the Summer Company program two years ago, started a flower and landscaping business, which she continues to operate today.

"It has taught me utmost responsibility and initiative," Mr. Eeuwes said.

Geordie Hill is also a musician, but he has opted to take his other interest — vehicles — and turn that into his business, The Last Detail Mobile Auto Detailing.

Mr. Hill's goal for the summer is to not only learn entrepreneurial skills, but pay for school.

Mr. Hill, 19, is in his third year at York University studying music education.

"So far it's actually been pretty good," the Stouffville resident said.

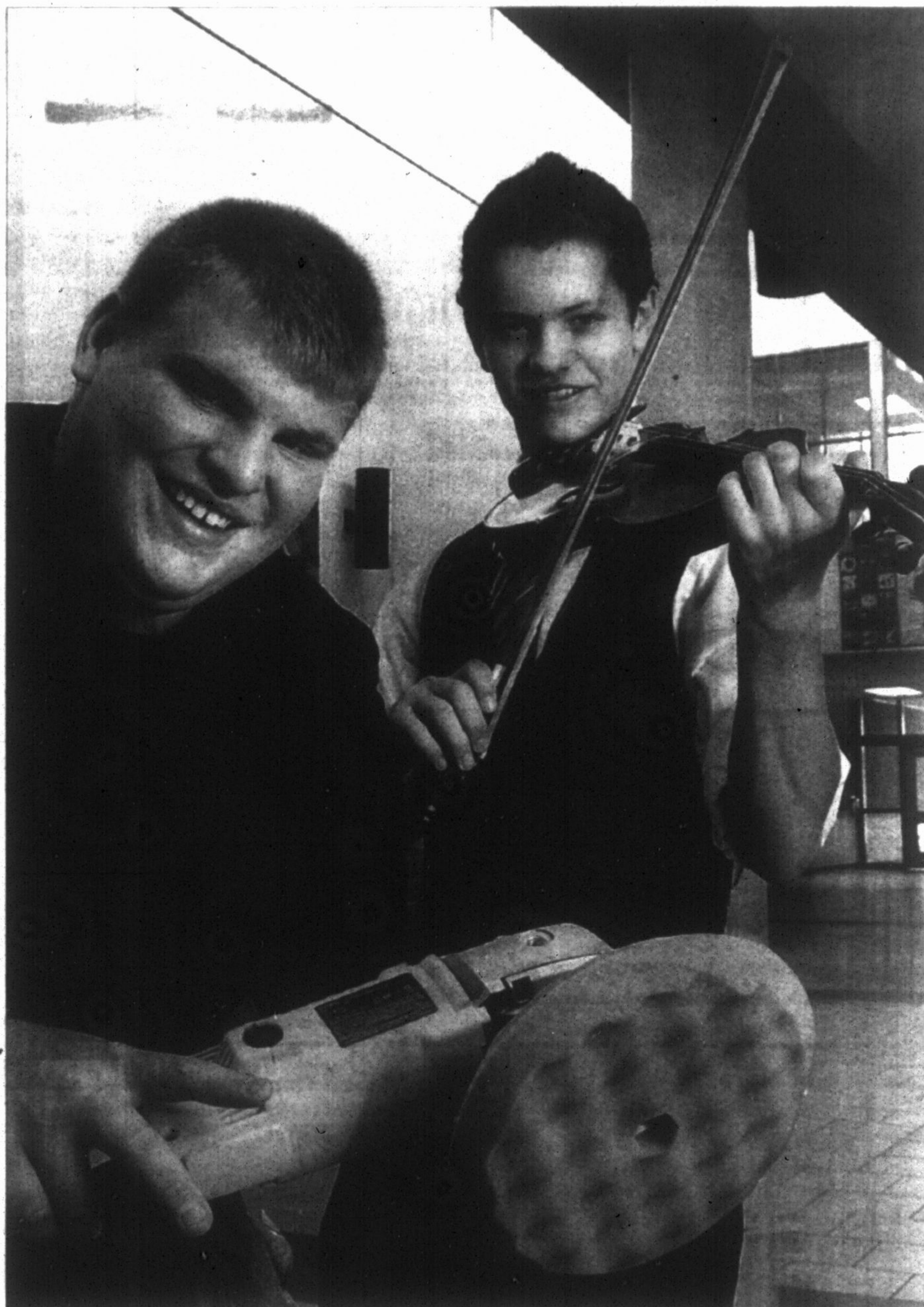
In preparation for starting the company, Mr. Hill went to Pittsburgh to take a detailing course and receive his certification.

Mr. Hill uses only eco-friendly car-cleaning products and will travel to Aurora, Newmarket, Markham, Pickering and Ajax.

Matthew Eeuwes can be contacted at sensationalstrings@gmail.com, 416-455-1347 and www.youtube.com/sensationalstrings.

Geordie Hill can be contacted at thelastdetail1@gmail.com or 416-528-0480.

For more information on the Summer Company program, go to www.ontario.ca/summercompany



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Geordie Hill (left) has started a car detailing business while Matthew Eeuwes used the start-up resources from the Summer Company program to establish himself as a violin for hire, performing at weddings and other functions this summer. The Whitchurch-Stouffville residents are two of 23 students from across York Region taking part in the program, which is operated through the York Small Business Enterprise Support Centre.

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