

# Town wants to hear from teenagers

Hey, Whitchurch-Stouffville teenagers. What do you want to do and how can the town help you do it? The municipality has launched the online Youth Up Community Survey for residents 13 to 17 years of age.

"We just want to find out what they're interested in, what they want to do and how they want to be engaged in the town," said Alison Jeschke, assistant recreation programmer for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Areas covered in the survey include sports/fitness, indoor and outdoor recreation, arts/culture as well as social/games.

"We hope to build up our youth programs so they have some place to go ... become more engaged," Ms

Jeschke said. "This is the first time we've really reached out and said: 'what do you want to do?'"

Funding for the survey is from the Healthy Communities grant. In August, the town received \$26,650 from the province to put towards physical activity, nutrition and healthy eating as well as mental health awareness programs.

Teens who take part are entered into a draw to win one of two \$50 and one of four \$25 iTunes gift cards.

The survey can be accessed through [www.townof-ws.com](http://www.townof-ws.com), Facebook - click on Mayor's Youth Council, as well as through a smartphone.

The survey runs until Oct. 31.

-Sandra Bolan



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Oak Ridges-Markham NDP candidate Joe Whitfeld talks with former party candidate Pamela Courtot at Nonna's restaurant in Markham during election-night festivities Thursday.

## Fewer than 18% of Ontarians voted for Liberals Thursday

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"The turnout is low, but I'm not so sure our democracy is weaker because of it," University of Toronto political science professor Nelson Wiseman said.

While it may seem like a bad thing, he pointed out democracies provide many other opportunities for citizens to get engaged and said a country such as Iraq isn't more democratic just because it has a higher turnout.

The ironic counterpoint to a low turnout could be that only those knowledgeable and interested are casting their votes while the apathetic stay away.

"Some people say just get out and vote," Mr. Wiseman said, as if that's the most important thing.

"I think it does matter who you vote for."

Richmond Hill fell below that less-than-impressive average, with just 43 per cent of voters turning out, compared to 47 per cent in 2007.

Howard Doughty, who lives in the Oak Ridges-Markham riding and teaches political science at Seneca College and York University, blamed voter apathy on a failure by party leaders to engage voters.

The three main leaders effectively campaigned in a bubble, apparently more concerned with not making a mistake than engaging voters, Mr. Doughty said.

"I'm not entirely sure what they're all afraid of," he said. "I don't think the public is fooled by it and I know they're not energized."

Whether or not it's because the

campaign did not excite voters or if it's a larger issue, it is of concern, York University professor Don Drummond said.

"It's troubling. The choice is an important one."

To put the numbers in perspective, it means that while the Liberals received 37.6 per cent of votes cast, fewer than 18 per cent of Ontarians voted for them.

*One of Mr. McGuinty's 2003 campaign promises was to increase turnout by 10 per cent, something that has clearly failed to happen, he noted.*

Advance polls were up from 2007, but that didn't seem to mean anything in the larger scheme.

Even the recent federal election, in which voter fatigue was a consistent theme, saw a turnout greater than 60 per cent.

Ontario traditionally has the lowest turnout in provincial elections, second only to Alberta, Mr. Wiseman pointed out.

He blames that on the province's centrality and a tendency to focus on federal issues at the expense of provincial ones in the media.

"It's a circular thing ... I'm not placing fault. There's only so much room in newspapers," he said.

One of Mr. McGuinty's 2003 campaign promises was to increase turnout by 10 per cent, something that has clearly failed to happen, he noted.

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to our community.

Smile Cookies are gone, but the smiles they've left in our community will last forever. Thanks to your support, Tim Hortons will be donating the entire proceeds to the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation. This year we direct the donation to the expansion campaign, specifically in support of improved inpatient Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services at the hospital.

