

Stouffville students shuffle off to Buffalo to volunteer

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You don't have to go far to see people living in the most dire of circumstances.

Just across the border in Buffalo is where Brother Andre Catholic High School students Sarah Steffoff and Cameron Nugent went this summer, as part of a humanitarian mission to provide assistance to recent American refugees.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Along with providing them groceries and someone to talk to, the 17-year-old students also participated in the city's Kids Club program, which provides fun activities to kids living in poor neighbourhoods.

"I don't think they get a lot of attention," Ms Steffoff said.

Buffalo was her second humanitarian trip this year. Ms Steffoff was previously in Africa.

"I was surprised how friendly they were and how happy they were to see us and rub our skin because of the colour difference," she said of the Africans she encountered.

For Mr. Nugent, Buffalo was his first humanitarian trip. So when the opportunity to travel to Thailand this February was offered to him, as well as to Ms Steffoff, by their church — Toronto's Center of Hope International Church — he took it.

"I want to help any way we can," he said.

"I just want to make any change there we can for their good."

While in Africa, Ms Steffoff saw a lot of unpleasant things, but she also knows she was sheltered from some of the country's harshest realities, which is why when she goes to Thailand, "I'm actually going to see things for what they are, not sugar-coated."

FUNDRAISING FOR THAILAND

Before Ms Steffoff and Mr. Nugent head to Thailand, they have to each raise the necessary \$2,500.

"I think it's worth every penny, however much it is, to see how we help these people," Ms Steffoff said.

Their church will be holding a fundraiser at Toronto's Fox Theatre in February and their school is expected to donate a portion of its proceeds from its annual Band Aid event.

"I want to inspire others to think of how they can help other people instead of what they can buy for Christmas," Ms Steffoff said.

That, along with saving for the trip, is why she won't be giving any Christmas gifts this year.

"In places that have a lot (they're) miserable ... and in other places where they have nothing they're so happy," she said.

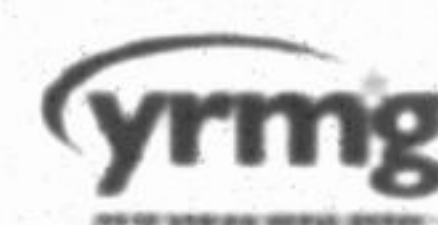
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Sarah Steffoff and Cameron Nugent did not have to go far to provide humanitarian help. The Stouffville residents and Brother Andre Catholic High School students went to Buffalo to help inner city children. In the future, they aspire to help in Thailand.



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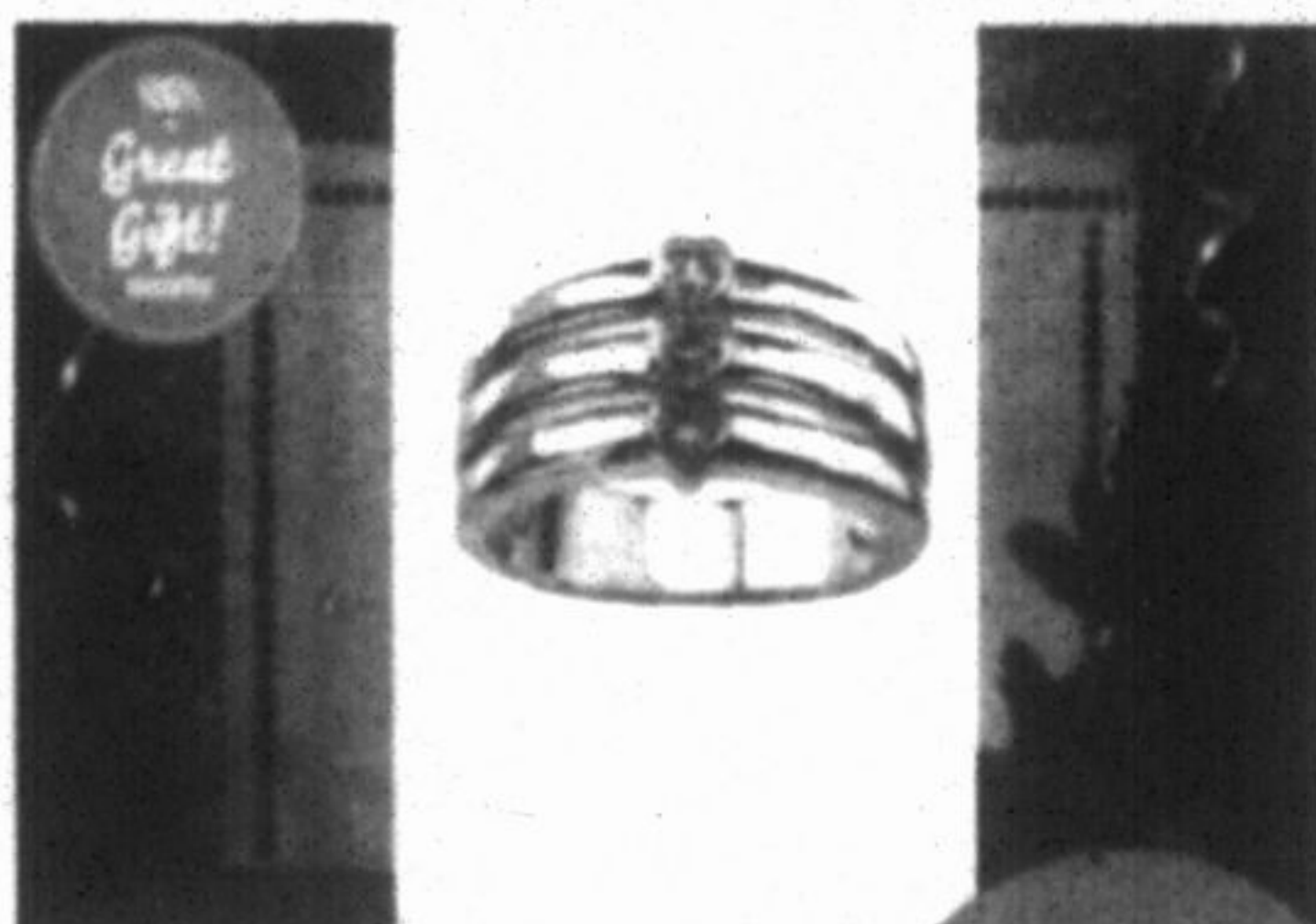
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