

THIS WEEK
ONLINE
yorkregion.com

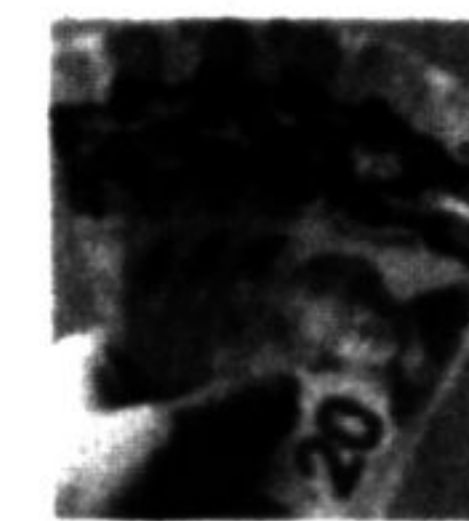
MULTIMEDIA



Send us your Family Day photographs for our online gallery.

► e-mail jpgs to jbower@yrmg.com

YOUR MONEY



Tips and tricks to help you pay down your holiday expenses

► <http://bit.ly/XAP7Uu>

Stouffville Legion Presents
The Marion Drexler Band
At the Stouffville Legion
150 Mostar Street
Friday, Feb. 22 • 7 p.m.
905-640-1714
FREE Admission in Club Room

Grade 8 grad ceremonies saved by board

BY KIM ZARZOUR
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A popular rite of passage has been preserved for York Region public school students graduating from Grade 8 this year.

The year-end graduation ceremony that was at risk of cancellation by teachers' withdrawal of voluntary activities will go ahead at all elementary schools, school board spokesperson Licinio Miguelo said.

The board, which earlier this month promised to step in to save high school graduations and proms, has now made a similar commitment for its younger students — the first board in the province to do so.

Newmarket father Michael Smith greeted the news with mixed emotions.

The Crossland Public School dad said parents at his son's school met last week to organize a graduation for the Grade 8 students because they believed teachers would not be helping.

The school principal said no decision on staff involvement had been made, but Mr. Smith said parents worried their children would miss out.

'Anyone who thinks this dispute has not been a distraction to children is sorely mistaken.'

Michael Smith
Newmarket parent
on teacher labour dispute

"We were taking the bull by the horns," Mr. Smith said.

While school administrators were positive and apologetic, parents arranged a meeting at one of their homes Thursday to plan an alternative, he said.

"Students who work hard all year deserve this reward," he said. "I give administration full credit for stepping up and doing the right thing."

"Hopefully this will put a

lot of parents' and children's minds at ease," said Bob Sandiford, principal at Buttonville Public School in Markham. "It's traditionally been an important event... a part of our elementary school culture."

Mr. Sandiford said he views graduation as his farewell to his students, many of whom return later to giggle and gaze at their graduation photographs next to kindergarten mugshots hung on school hallways.

Many children watched their older siblings make the transition and launch into high school with a special ceremony and hoped to do the same this spring, Mr. Smith said.

"Why should they be affected by what goes on with the union's struggle and labour disputes?" he said. "Anyone who thinks this dispute has not been a distraction to children is sorely mistaken."

Organization of the Grade 8 graduation is usually a team effort, Mr. Miguelo said, and the board will step in to fill gaps left by teachers who are protesting Bill 115.

"The logistics and parameters of these events have not yet been worked out."

The board will hold meetings with principals and stakeholders and conduct surveys to determine participation in the coming weeks.

"We will be planning and ensuring the safety of all our students," he said. "We know this is an important milestone for Grade 8."

FIRST IN ONTARIO

The rest of the province, meanwhile, is awaiting a ruling by the Ontario Labour Relations Board on a landmark hearing into whether or not a teachers union illegally directed its members to withdraw from extracurriculars, and if teachers are bound by collective agreements now that the controversial Bill 115 — which imposed contracts — has been withdrawn.

Tuesday, lawyers wrapped up testimony that began Jan. 25 between the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario and two small boards, Upper Canada District School Board in Eastern Ontario and Trillium Lakelands District School Board.

A charter challenge of Bill 115 by the provincial unions is set for Oct. 21 to 25 at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.



On March 10, 2013, Markham Stouffville Hospital will achieve a significant milestone...

MOVING PATIENTS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES INTO OUR NEW BUILDING

In anticipation of the move, beginning in early 2013, we will decrease service in a number of areas to allow our staff to complete training and prepare to provide care in our new areas. A number of programs will be ramping down elective services including surgery and diagnostic imaging. This will not affect patients who come to our emergency department, this will only affect elective procedures or tests.

PHASE ONE: Moving in is just the beginning of MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL'S EXPANSION

WHO IS MOVING?

A number of programs and services are moving into our new building.

- Emergency department
- Inpatient and outpatient mental health
- Diagnostic imaging
- Surgery
- Critical care
- Childbirth and children's health centre
- And a number of inpatient beds and support services

HOW CAN YOU HELP US?

On the day of the move and in the days following the move, we will be learning to care for our patients in our new space. If you need to come to the hospital for an appointment or to come to the emergency department, we will be here to provide care for you. However, if you do not need to visit the hospital, we ask you to not come to the hospital in the weeks immediately following the move. This will allow us to continue to focus on our patients.

WHAT WILL CHANGE / WHAT WILL STAY THE SAME?

Although the physical location of many of the departments will change and they will be in locations in the new building, the overall number of beds will remain the same as

it is today. This is to allow us to make the transition in the safest way possible. It is important to know that overall our capacity is not immediately increasing once we move into the new building.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Moving into the new building is just Phase one in a multiyear plan. Once we move in March and begin providing care in our new building, we will begin extensive renovations to our existing building. The hospital will continue to be a construction site until late 2014. We will make certain that the transition is as smooth as possible and will have signage and volunteers to assist with helping our patients and visitors find their way around.

MORE INFORMATION?

Our website — www.msh.on.ca is a great resource for more information about our move, the expanded facility and our renovation plans. Visit often to be kept up-to-date and if you have any questions, feel free to email myhospital@msh.on.ca



www.msh.on.ca