

ALL TOGETHER NOW



STAFF PHOTOS/JOERD WITTEVEEN

Grade 8 students Amanda LeGrow, 14, Luke Cummings-Avoledo, 13, and Holly Newlands, 13, lead the grade 5 and 6 students at Summitivew Public School in the Big Crunch at 2:30 p.m. exactly Thursday afternoon as part of a simultaneous cross-Canada Healthy Schools initiative.

Boards tackle full-day kindergarten challenges

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
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With the final year of full day kindergarten implementation around the corner, York Region's school boards are coping better than most of their provincial counterparts.

While school boards across the province struggle with getting their facilities ready for the full-day kindergarten provincewide implementation date of September 2014, on top of the 20-student cap on primary classrooms, both the York Region and York Catholic district school boards say they haven't had to take drastic measures to comply with the legislation.

Some school boards in Ontario are transferring older students to different schools, reworking school borders and adding more portables to find the space for 4 and 5 year olds to attend school full time.

"We are going to survive this and our schools will be fine," York Region District School Board accommodation manager Dawn Adams said.

Finding space for the provincial initiatives hasn't come without challenges for the board, she added. However, being one of the few school boards in the province that is still growing helped the board have the necessary space ready, as the student population would be increasing even if there was no full-day kindergarten.

For example, there are 13 school additions planned this summer that will open up space for more kindergarten classrooms.

The most challenging schools have been in high growth areas such as Vaughan, north Markham, Stouffville, east Aurora and Newmarket.

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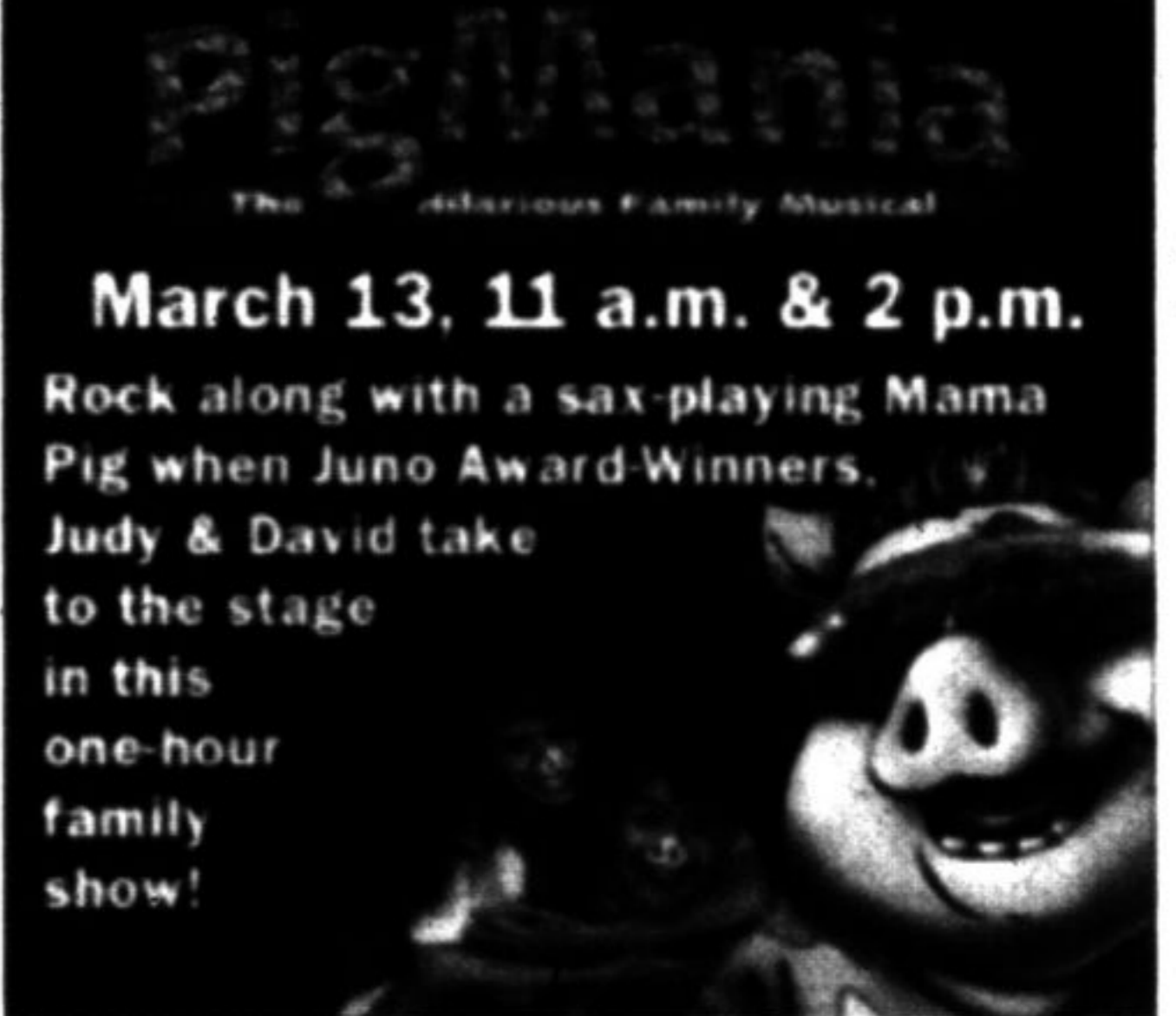
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