

## IF A TREE FALLS IN THE ...



STAFF PHOTO/SANDRA BOLAN

What was billed as the final storm of the winter hit Whitchurch-Stouffville late this week, toppling two large trees in Memorial Park yesterday and causing other damage. The good news? Temperatures are to climb into double digits beginning Monday.

# 911 operators, callers recognized

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You probably consider police, fire and EMS workers to be first responders.

But in reality, it is our 911 operators who are first to come to your aid.

"When people call us, they are often hysterical (and) by the time police get there, they have often calmed down," said Lori Magoffin, who has been a 911 operator for 10 years.

"We want to calm them down so police are safe and by the time they get there, everyone can have a positive experience."

This week, the unsung heroes of our emergency services were thanked for their efforts to help people in need.

As part of Wednesday's York Region tri-services awards ceremony, several 911 communicators were honoured.

One of the York Regional Police platoons was given the outstanding performance award for its work to save 20 anglers trapped on disintegrating ice in Lake Simcoe.

The incident occurred last March, when ice began to break apart, leaving a 500-metre gap that extended two kilometres.

Theirs is a thankless job, said Staff Sgt. Dave Russell, who is in charge of the YRP platoons. They miss personal functions all the time because they are on the job.

They are the first point of contact and they have a very professional and empathetic attitude about that responsibility, he added.

## CRANK CALLS

Not all 911 calls made in York Region are award-winning. Go to [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com) for a story on calls that won't win, including the man who called for an ambulance because his condom broke during sex.

In 2012, local 911 operators handled 251,370 calls.

"We're here 24/7, anytime someone is in trouble or needs our help. We take pride in making sure emergency services are safe," said Kalai Pitts, who has worked for the service for five years.

"People never call us because they're having a good time, so it is nice to be recognized."

Also honoured were two young York Region residents who acted responsibly in calling 911 to help those around them.

David Adetuwo, 11, from Markham, called 911 and made sure his brother was safe when he suffered a seizure in the family's home.

"It feels good to be treated like a hero," said the boy, who moved to Canada from Nigeria two years ago.

Despite all the good news, concerns were also noted during the ceremony.

One manager noted the fact 85,573 of the 251,370 calls received last year - 34 per cent or every third call - were unintentional, colloquially known as pocket dials.

# Can you hold my hand?

Actual  
911 Call

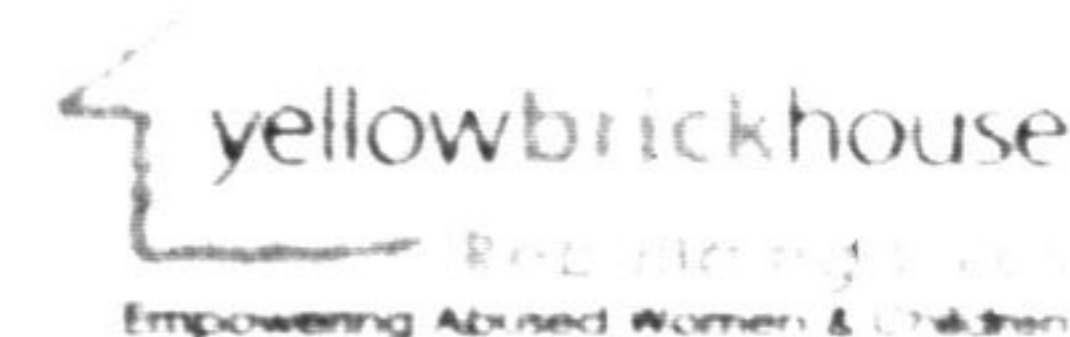
Operator: What's the hanging emergency?  
Child: My mother and daddy are having a fight screaming  
Operator: Is he hitting her?  
Child: Stop it. Could you get the police, please?  
Operator: Okay, we are going to be there  
Child: Stop it. Crying  
Child: He just knocked my sister out  
Operator: What sister did he knock down?  
Child: My little sister  
Child: The four-year-old. Oh my God!!! Screaming  
Operator: What's the matter?  
Child: Something happened. Screaming and Crying

## Can You Help?

Please join us on **Friday, May 3rd, 2013 at 7pm** for a very special evening supporting services for abused women and children in York Region.



**Angus Glen Golf Club & Conference Centre**  
10080 Kennedy Road, Markham



For tickets please call **Amber** at **905-709-0900 ext. 2230**. Tickets price: **\$225.00**  
If you are unable to attend but would like to make a donation to a great cause, please contact Amber.