

OPINION



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Editorial

How tolerant are you, Whitchurch-Stouffville?

**ISSUE: In spite of good works,
racism still rears its ugly head in
our changing community**

It's our dirty, little secret,
Whitchurch-Stouffville.
We hear the whispers.
We hear the stories.
It's called racism.

It starts at home.

And it's got to stop.

Our community, specifically
urban Stouffville, has changed
drastically in the past 10 years.

We were one of the fastest-
growing small towns in the coun-
try, according to the last census.

Those new residents, many of
whom bought new homes on the
edges of our town, are originally
from countries spread across the
world, the census also tells us.

We are now a reflection of
Canada, a multicultural com-
munity on the outskirts of the
nation's biggest city.

That should be embraced.

Sadly, it always isn't.

We've heard from people who
moved from Stouffville because
of the changes in our commu-
nity.

And they weren't just com-
plaining about the sheer num-
bers of people moving in.

We've heard the racial slurs,
even from business owners. If
anyone should be throwing out
the welcome mat, isn't it our mer-
chants?

Thankfully, the vast majority
of residents are tolerant.

Some have even gone above
and beyond in attempts to wel-
come our newest neighbours:

- The Stouffville Multicultural
Association has been bringing
people together for the past two
years.

Its motto says it all: "All Ages.
All Cultures. All Welcome..."

The group promotes integra-
tion through its buddy system,
provides volunteer translation
services, shares information on
cultural traditions and obser-
vances and takes part in local
events

- The English as a Second
Language program at EastRidge
Evangelical Missionary Church
has been serving newcomers
from around the globe for four
years.

"We teach them English, but
we're offering them friendship
and fellowship," Wanda Knights,
a program co-ordinator, said last
year.

Intolerance isn't always racial-
ly based.

How do you feel about mem-
bers of our gay, lesbian, bisexual
and transgendered community
living on your street?

Would a Pride parade fly down
Stouffville's Main Street the way
one did in Richmond Hill this
summer?

Whitchurch-Stouffville hasn't
experienced a public display of
intolerance.

No debates at council over
banning No. 4 from subdivisions.

No public outcry over Chinese
business signage, the tipping
point for an ugly debate on rac-
ism that went viral in neighbour-
ing Markham 18 years ago.

Be honest.

Are you tolerant, Whitchurch-
Stouffville?

How about your children?

**BOTTOM LINE: Are you
tolerant, Whitchurch-
Stouffville?**

**Is there an issue about which you are passionate?
You could be a Saturday Forum contributor and
get the chance to have your piece published along
with your name and headshot. E-mail your 450-word
submission to jmason@yrmg.com**

STOUFFVILLE SAYS/SANDRA BOLAN

What are the biggest issues facing Whitchurch-Stouffville?

The Big 5-0

Let's get you interested in voting



NANCY THOMPSON

"I think we've got (enough
development here ... It just really
isn't a small town anymore"



GAVIN ROBERTSON

"I know there is an out-of-town
mentality here." On the new, Ball
diamond in Memorial Park "what
was wrong with the old one?"

More answers on page 25.

HOT TOPIC: Markham animal control

City should let cat shelter relocate

*Re: Is It time for Markham
to have its own animal shel-
ter? editorial, June 27.*

As a responsible pet
owner, I read your editorial
with great interest. One sec-
tion, in particular, struck a
painful chord:

"Meanwhile, a surprising
number of pets, especially
cats, that are picked up in
Markham end up being
euthanized. In 2011, the fig-
ure was 59 per cent. Reports
on Markham's city web-
site, which are incomplete
for 2012, show that trend
appearing to continue."

My last three cats were
obtained through North
Toronto Cat Rescue in
Thornhill. After my initial
visit, I also became a regular
volunteer.

This "no kill" completely
volunteer-run shelter, sadly,
is destined for demolition in
the fall of 2014.

I, along with other pet
owners, I'm sure, would be
hopeful the City of Markham
would allow this remarkable
shelter to relocate (hope-
fully, in an area easily acces-
sible and close to transit).

Surely, there's a place for

this unique facility, along
with a humanely organized
shelter in Markham's future.

If not, there will be at least
200 more cats to add to the
OSPAs chopping block.

STEVE LIEBGOTT
RICHMOND HILL

We can find money for our own shelter

*Re: Is It time for Markham
to have its own animal shel-
ter? editorial, June 27.*

What a great edito-
rial. Markham is certainly
big enough to warrant an
animal shelter and, as the
editorial states, if we had
decent animal services
with the OSPCA or another
group we would be able to
get along without a shelter
for a few more years.

As Markham residents,
we are shelling out \$400,000
for animal adoptions,
wildlife help and services,
housing etc. and, so far, the
OSPAs is only doing one of
these, housing.

The euthanasia rate is
high, wildlife services are
non-existent and the lack of
accountability is sloughed
off by the City of Markham
and the OSPCA and, as a
taxpayer, I am sick of it.

Markham needs its own
shelter right here in the city,
not Newmarket or anywhere
else.

We always seem to find
the money for other needed
services, why not for this?

P. DUNCAN
UNIONVILLE

Time to take control of animal services

*Re: Is It time for Markham
to have its own animal shel-
ter? editorial, June 27.*

I was elated to read
the editorial about the
need for an animal shelter
in Markham. As the city
expands and grows, it is
time Markham take control
of its animal services.

Many residents are not
able to travel to the shelter
in Newmarket, and instead
look to pet stores and Kijiji
to purchase animals when
they would otherwise have
adopted from a shelter.

Thank you for bringing
this important issue to light
so, hopefully, one day we will
have a successful and acces-
sible animal shelter in our
city.

RHIANNON LANE
MARKHAM