Homeless visitor prompts food drive at golf course

When a homeless individual wandered onto the Bushwood Golf Club fairways earlier this year, it sent a message to Mary Evelyn.

The managing director of the public course wanted to do something to assist those in dire need.

Earlier this month, Evelyn took the initiative by launching a charitable project to raise money and food for the homeless with the proceeds split between the Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville food banks.

The course is on Markham's Reesor Road, just minutes south of Stouffville.

Customers who give non-perishable food items or a donation of \$2 during the two-week drive that ends Sunday will receive customer appreciation pricing for a designated one-week period when they play a round at Bushwood Golf Club's championship or executive courses.

"When we had a homeless person wander onto the course it really brought home the issue to our family and staff," she said. "We realize there are many people in our communities that need help with food and this is an opportunity to get our club and customers involved.

"We discussed the needs of our community with staff and felt this would keep eyeryone engaged with assisting with food during the summer, when people tend to be on vacation and not necessarily focused on the less advantaged in our local community."

To date they've raised \$420 and have two large containers full of food items.

By the end of the project date, Ms Evelyn remained optimistic they can double their current figures.

Citing their fundraising attempts have gone well, she said they intend to make this their annual project.

It's been so well received by our customers and staff," she said.

Michael Hayakawa

Farmers feel lost in urban shuffle

BY SANDRA BOLAN

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Farmers want their image improved and want to know why today's youth don't want to lend a helping hand, according to Nirvana Champion. the town's economic development officer.

"With rapid urbanization, the message of agriculture and farming can get a little bit muddled," Ms Champion said.

Perhaps that is why today's youth don't want to work on farms.

Finding part-time workers is one of the issues York Region farmers noted to be problematic earlier this year, during conversations with the not-for-profit Workforce Planning Board of York Region and Bradford West Gwillimbury, according to the town's July report to council.

"The work isn't of interest to them," Ms Champion said of youngsters and farming. "It is a general trend. Kids are attracted to the bright lights.

"We don't really understand what the youth of today are looking for," she said.

Along with helping ensure farming remains a key local industry, the municipality has streamlined some of its new business processes, as a way to help grow the commercial sector.

Business owners who scope out and find potential locations within Whitchurch-Stouffville to set up shop will no longer be shuttled from the economic development department to planning. Activities within economic development, pertaining to new business, are now under the planning department, according to Ms Champion.

"Things weren't terrible. ... We had some businesses come in. We always want to strive for better levels of services," she said, noting the shift was proactive, not reactive

A study on what the municipality is actually doing to attract businesses to Whitchurch-Stouffville will come to council in September.



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