

Bowling from page 13

lot to offer youth. "You don't need any special skills to enjoy bowling," says John. "It's an activity just about anyone, at any age, can play. And it stays with you all your life." YBC says bowling teaches youth many important skills such as coordination, balance and motor skills, not to mention social skills and sportsmanship. John says that he has seen self-esteem build in many of his young bowlers as they have improved. He adds: "I hear people talking about the need for a curling rink in town, but I think a lot more people will use a bowling alley."

Former mayor, Sue Sherban, says that there's no reason that the town can't have a bowling alley, even if it has to be in a different location. "There are many creative ways to meet this community need including working to attract another private bowling centre to town or getting a local developer to put one into their future building plans," says Sue. "The Stouffville Bowling Centre is a key community meeting spot, just like the pool, the library and the

arena. Having a variety of meeting places like these is how we all stay connected and how we are able to achieve that wonderful small town feel that Stouffville is known for. Losing the bowling alley means some people are losing their way to connect. It's like chipping away at that friendly, supportive culture we've built here. And the more we chip away at it, the more Stouffville will start to look like Ajax or Scarborough. I know this is not what any of us want."

For people like June Hogg, the closing of the bowling alley is a loss on many levels. She will miss her weekly visit with her bowling pals and she says this may be the end of her 50-year bowling career. After losing her eyesight in one eye and then suffering a partial loss in the other, June moved to Fairgate Crescent where she could walk to the centre on Main Street. She has been playing in a women's bowling group since 1997. "I really look forward to coming here every week," says June. "I don't know what I'm going to do when it's gone."

STAND UP FOR BOWLING STOUFFVILLE!

If we're going to keep our small town feel, we need community spaces like the bowling alley and we need to meet the needs of ALL the members of our town. Here's how you can help push for a new bowling centre:

1. Email Mayor Emmerson and your councillor and tell them you want an accessible bowling alley in Stouffville (you will find all of their emails at: http://www.townofws.com/members_council.asp)
2. Organize a group to champion the cause and to work with other bowling advocates (please email me if you want to connect with anyone in this article: jacqueline@jacquelinefoley.com)
3. Get a local business or service club to pledge their support.

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