

## Town Recreation Team Working In Synch

By Kimjal Dagli Shah

If you've ever wondered who's responsible for that swim you enjoy every weekend, or the Pilates class that keeps you fit, you might want to thank Micole Ongman and her team.

Micole has been manager of recreation for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for the past 10 years. She has witnessed as well as contributed to the growth of leisure and recreational services in town, and is on the brink of unveiling a new master plan that will cater to the growing population.

"I've lived in Stouffville for 20 years but I joined the recreation department only in 2000. We had a small department then, and the town didn't have a leisure centre or an indoor pool," recalled Micole.

But small beginnings were made, and the Lebovic Leisure Centre saw the light of day in 2001. "Along the

way, we created a whole bunch of new programs and hired staff to run the Lebovic Centre. We now have over a thousand people alone in swimming classes, and the number doesn't include those in drop-in programs," said Micole, who has two children herself. "My kids are now 12 and 14 years old but as a resident and mother, I realized the need for recreation that is convenient and accessible."

With Nineteen on the Park, the Lebovic Leisure Centre, an arena, four community centres, soccer fields and a museum, Micole and her team are constantly on the go. "We are excited about the master plan, which will guide us for the next five years. Once it is released, we will have clear direction because we've collated the results from public meetings, a survey and extensive study," said Micole, never undermining the efforts of her team members. "I have a great team and I'm very lucky to

work with people who've chosen to do this as a career."

Micole is also happy that recreation in town is fast becoming a community effort, with a growing number of volunteers. "We hire a lot of youth and high school students for part-time work or volunteer hours. It's been a good community, and we're glad that people play an active role," she pointed out.

Little wonder then that the Lebovic Centre alone gets about 200 visits a week, excluding library visitors. "It shows that our programs are working. Our fitness supervisor, for instance, stays right on top of new trends and helps us introduce classes like Zumba and Pilates, which are very popular. Our programs for pre-school children too are in great demand," explained Micole.

So the next time you take that lap in the pool, or shake a hip at a Zumba class, there's an entire team's effort to be appreciated.



The recreation team at the Lebovic Leisure Centre are always on the go in our rapidly growing community. Helping to keep us fit and healthy are, back row: Micole Ongman, Cathy Richardson, Stacey Stevens. Front row: Barb Armstrong, Jen McEachen, Kelly Leveck, Yorick Tong. Team member Craig Baillie was absent when this photo was taken.

6176 MAIN ST.  (905) 640-4248

### Annual General Meeting

**Monday November 29 - 7pm**  
Town Council Chambers, 37 Sandiford Dr. 4th Floor  
Special Guests / Swearing-In Ceremony / Refreshments  
**ALL WELCOME TO COME**

## Give A Day To World AIDS

Rouge River Connection and Albert Street Four will perform at the Stouffville Harambee, a benefit concert in support of Give a Day to World AIDS, which takes place Nov. 25 at 7:30 p.m. at Nineteen on the Park.

Stouffville resident Dr. Jane Philpott, who is chief of the department of family medicine at Markham Stouffville Hospital, is a driving force behind the initiative. She and her husband, Pep Philpott, have seen first hand the heartbreaking realities of the HIV pandemic during their time in Africa, and Give a Day is a grassroots response to this pandemic.

It challenges every Canadian to mark World AIDS Day on Dec. 1 by giving one day's pay to an organization dedicated to the fight against AIDS. Give a Day recommends two such organizations: the Stephen Lewis Foundation and Dignitas International.

There are 35 million people around the world living with HIV and

extraordinary progress has been made in recent years but, tragically, more than 5,000 people are still dying every day from the infection. To date Give a Day, which is almost entirely volunteer driven, has raised 2.5 million dollars, and at least 12 hospitals and 16 law firms in the Greater Toronto Area participate in the challenge.

Tickets for the concert, which will feature a mix of folk, country, bluegrass and gospel music, are \$15 and are available from Chic Thrills, 6316 Main St. and Reesor Farm Kitchen, 100 Ringwood Drive.

\*Harambee means 'pulling together' in Swahili.

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