

'Moving' performance



Juno award-nominated children's performer Mary Lambert performs at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library last Thursday. For more on plans to expand the library, see story on page 4.

STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Teen charged in TTC robberies

Toronto police have charged 11 people — including a Stouffville teenager — after a months-long investigation into a string of TTC collection booth robberies dubbed "Project Castle".

Police say that between March 3 and May 28, five TTC booths were robbed at gunpoint. They launched an investigation into the crimes, comparing them with other robberies and staking out locations over the course of what TTC CEO Andy Byford calls a "long and painstaking investigation".

On July 23, 10 search warrants were executed in dwellings across the city, and 11 people were arrested. In total, it is believed the group is responsible for 12 armed robberies. Also robbed were a convenience store, Tim Hortons and gas station and a Scotiabank.

Jonathan Pileggi, 18, of Stouffville is one of 11 people facing more than 140 charges, from conspiracy to commit an indictable offence, to armed robbery and theft over \$5,000, along with a number of related firearms offences.

— *Torstar News Service*

Top graduates busy outside of classroom, too

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Only 0.2 per cent separated Stouffville District Secondary School's top three graduates.

Andrew Dunsmoor and Helen Zhu both graduated with 95 per cent averages, while Kopica Thayaparen finished high school with a 94.8 per cent overall average.

"I'm not naturally smart, but I work for my smartness," Thayaparen, 17, said.

Another key to Thayaparen's academic success was taking courses she was passionate about, such as life sciences, but in particular, biology.

Thayaparen heads to McMaster University this September, majoring in integrated sciences, which isn't exactly what she was planning on doing five years ago.

In 2010, the then-Grade 7 Harry Bowes Public School student told



ANDREW DUNSMOOR: Scholarships recipient tied for top average at high school - 95 per cent.

The Sun-Tribune she wanted to be a social justice lawyer fighting child labour. Five years ago, Thayaparen was one of 20 students honoured

by the York Region District School Board's Celebrating Student Success program.

While at Harry Bowes, she was involved in fundraisers for underprivileged children in Kenya and emergency food programs for York Region.

SKIPPED PARTIES

In high school, Thayaparen was on the student council, in the science club and on the prom committee.

She also worked part-time at a fertility clinic in Markham as a receptionist.

"I'm pretty sure there are other parties I can go to, but your marks are a one-shot thing," Thayaparen said of the sacrifices she made to get her grades.

Just edging out Thayaparen from the top spot was Dunsmoor, 17, whose goal was to graduate with a 95 per cent average so he



KOPICA THAYAPAREN: Stouffville grad taking her 94.8 average to McMaster University this fall.

could receive an \$8,000 scholarship from Queen's University.

He will be studying engineering with a bent towards healthcare.

Like Thayaparen, his averages remained in the 90s all through high school.

Dunsmoor's final year, however, was two years in the making.

In Grade 11 he took Grade 12 English because it's the "most intensive course with the most work to do. If I could do well in this class, I could do well in any class."

He finished with a 94 per cent average.

But it wasn't all about hitting the books. Dunsmoor was in the science club, on the improv team and on the music council, as well as in the band.

Along with being the class of 2015's top grad, Dunsmoor won the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville proficiency award and the Frank Yake Legion award.

"It's nice to move on from high school," he said.

The Sun-Tribune was unable to contact Zhu.

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