

Stouffville residents send children's supplies to Swaziland

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Residents in Stouffville and across York Region sent a shipping container full of children's supplies to Swaziland on Saturday, Sept. 24.

The small African country of 1.1 million people is where the charity Heart for Africa works with local churches to care for orphans, provide food to the local populace and offer employment services.

The charity offers short-term service trips, child sponsorships and large fundraising programs.

One of those fundraising programs involves donors, volunteers and residents offering items to ship via freighter.

Stouffville residents Leslie and Fraser Wilkinson agreed to act as a drop-off point for other residents donating items.

"It's very, very difficult as Canadians to wrap our heads around that these people have nothing," Wilkinson said. "There's no water, there's no power, there's nothing.

"Sending a container of diapers and other useful items over is just a way to practically support the work they're doing," he added.

Approximately 33,000 diapers, 44,000 baby wipes, 100 large boxes and bags of children's clothing and blankets, three playground slides, 15 bicycles and several toys and pairs of shoes were collected over a period of five months.

Residents came to learn about the charity's fundraising effort through word-of-mouth and social media.

Students at Newmarket & District Christian Academy combined efforts with their parents after hearing about the fundraising effort directly from Heart for Africa. In one week, the school managed to send Wilkinson "50 garbage bags of new kids' clothing, brand new blankets, bags of brand new crocs and more."

Heart for Africa's original goal for Canada's shipment was 15,000 diapers and 30,000 wipes. That goal has been long surpassed. Wilkinson says though he received 150 to 250 deliveries in the course of five months.

"Our community has come together to give back to a wonderful organization that serves the poor and the needy and gives back



Steve Somerville/Metroland

Leslie and Fraser Wilkinson, along with several other volunteers loaded a shipping container full of supplies en route to Swaziland as part of a charity campaign with Heart for Africa.

to these children who have been abandoned," Wilkinson said.

Two storage lockers at Senti-

nel Storage were unloaded into a 20-foot shipping container on Saturday, Sept. 24 where 20 volun-

teers worked from 6 to 10 a.m. to make sure all items collected were shipped to Swaziland.

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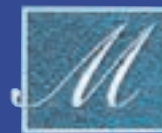
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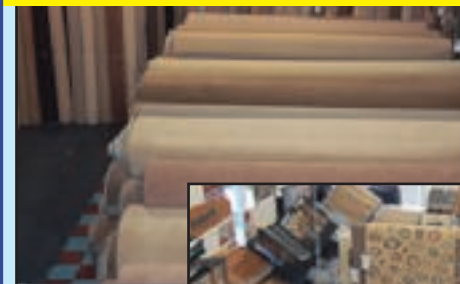
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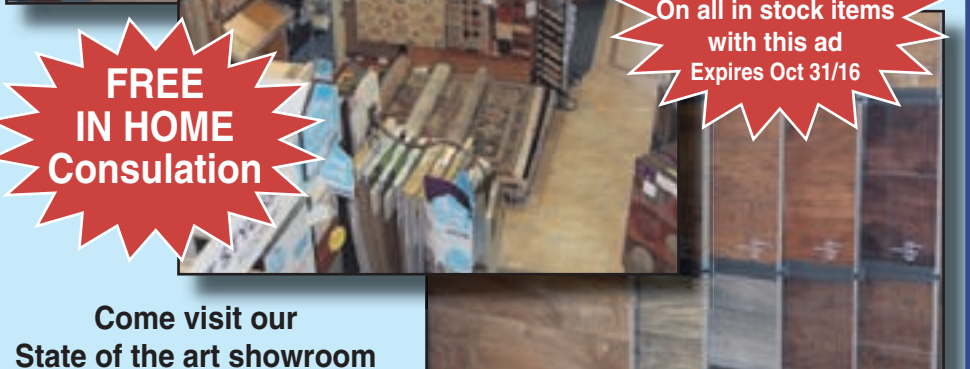
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