

## Banking On Community Support Food Bank Helps 80 To 100 People A Month

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Here's something Whitchurch-Stouffville can be proud of - a food bank with a full pantry.

"It is a very good sign. It proves that we are a caring, loving community," said Marion Wells, co-ordinator and chairperson of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

"My theory is that a community is only as strong as its weakest member. The food bank is to share with those who have hit a rough patch and we have had a lot of support from corporations and individuals in the town."

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank serves between 80 and 100 people a month, and is open every Tuesday from 9.30 a.m. to noon, or "until everyone is served," said Marion, who got involved as a volunteer co-ordinator several years before she became chairperson.

"From Thanksgiving to Christmas is a very generous time and even though it slows down after, things pick up again around Easter. But we have never had to go out soliciting for donations. We had a drive in June last year but this year, our pantry is full," she explained.

A healthy sign for a town that's growing in size and popularity. What's even more impressive is that the food bank doesn't ask for proof of income or bills from those that come for help.

"The only criterion is that they have a Stouffville address. We have a list of things we offer. All they have to do is come in and mark off what they need and we try to fill the list. We haven't found that we have been abused or taken advantage of. Those that come in are people who are in dire straits, mostly seasonal workers like carpenters and landscape workers who don't find work in the winter. The number of people coming in usually

goes down in the summer," said Marion, who has been a Stouffville resident for 70 years.

"We can only give out what we take in. We sometimes also buy things like meat, eggs, cheese and yogurt. Around Easter, we will provide a small ham if they eat meat and if they don't, we give eggs or whatever else they may need."

The board is planning to move the food bank, located at 15336 Ninth Line, into town but "that's a five-year project." Marion hopes that the move into town will help the food bank become even more accessible to people.

"We discourage home delivery of food but we will always deliver the first time. We assess whether a person is able to come because we also want them to see where it's coming from and how much effort we put into it."

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Stouffville Garden Club president Donna McMaster (left) presents a donation to Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank volunteers Joan and Carol. Club members collected contributions at their annual general meeting last November. Alison Jones photo

## Club Thanks Outgoing President

By Rochelle D'souza

Ten cheers to Will Morley for giving us 10 years! He has spent a lot of time and energy for the betterment of seniors.

Will has always been active in our community. He served on the Regional Municipality of York from 2004 to 2006 on the accessibility advisory committee. He was on the transportation advocacy group, commitment and support of specialized transportation in 2002. Another great achievement was serving two terms on town council, and he is still active on town committees.

Will was senior of the year in 2007, a councillor from 1980 to 1988, and contributed to our first accessible trail in York Region Forest in 2010. He was on the town's committee of adjustment for many years. His ultimate goal was to acquire our own seniors centre.

Now the club's past president, he is succeeded by incoming president Pat Ogston. For more information on Fifty-Five Plus Club events, activities and trips call 905-640-1910, Ext. 2955.

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