

## Volunteers Raise Funds For Tanzanian Solar Project

By Kate Gilderdale  
Stouffville Free Press

When Musselman's Lake resident Sherri Ireland visited an orphanage in Tanzania last year with a group of volunteers, it was a life-altering experience.

"It started off with a friend I play golf with, who mentioned she was thinking about going to Africa," said Sherri. "She lives in Collingwood and is friends with someone up there whose sister runs an orphanage."

As her friend told her more about the Majengo Children's Home and asked if she would be interested in joining her on the trip, "I said 'count me in'." The home provides food, medical assistance, housing, education, sports and recreation to its 84 young residents, in a warm and

loving environment.

The volunteer group who accompanied her included Denise Heapey from Claremont and Lisa Oelke from Toronto, who is in the solar industry. Lisa was asked for her advice on a solar solution for the orphanage as it is not on the electrical grid. She quickly enrolled three volunteers – two engineers and an electrician – to come up with a design.

"By May 2014 the design was complete but the price tag was daunting at \$40,000 US," said Sherri. "The solar funds had to be raised without impacting the operational cost fundraising." Sherri, Lisa and Denise responded to the challenge by raising the entire amount by last December.

With the assistance of a local company in Tanzania, they are planning to return this spring to complete their

mission, said Sherri.

"We're continuing to fundraise for the solar (system) because it needs to be maintained to work properly. And once we were over there, we couldn't just leave (the children) behind, but we couldn't bring them with us, so we had to decide what we could do."

The team's efforts have already made a huge difference, as a note on the Majengo website attests.

"Huge thanks from all of us at Majengo! to Lisa Oelke and her fabulous solar team in Canada for their awesome work: designing, coordinating, procuring the best local contractor and provider, and soon installing a full solar system. Up until now our 84 kids have been fed and put to bed in pitch African darkness, with the occasional help of a rickety generator system."

The group is returning later this spring and is currently seeking donations of clothing to distribute when they arrive. "We need warm weather clothes for kids from about 4 to 15 years old, from new underwear to t-shirts and shorts," said Sherri.

"This is really a prototype: we are going to monitor it for about six months. Providing everything is up and running we would like to take this vision to other orphanages."

To find out more about donating clothes or funds for the solar system, email Sherri at [sireland12@hotmail.com](mailto:sireland12@hotmail.com).

For more information on the Majengo Children's Home visit [www.majengo.org](http://www.majengo.org).



Musselman's Lake resident Sherri Ireland (right) at the Majengo Children's Home in Tanzania in 2014.

## Hospital Fundraiser Marks 25 Years

On April 17, Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation will celebrate a quarter of a century serving the community at the 25th Anniversary Ball at Hilton Toronto/Markham Suites Conference Centre & Spa.

Cocktails will be served at 6 p.m. and dinner will begin at 7:30 p.m. The black-tie optional event will be emceed by Erin Davis of CHFI and will include entertainment, live and silent auctions and a raffle, with a host of fabulous prizes.

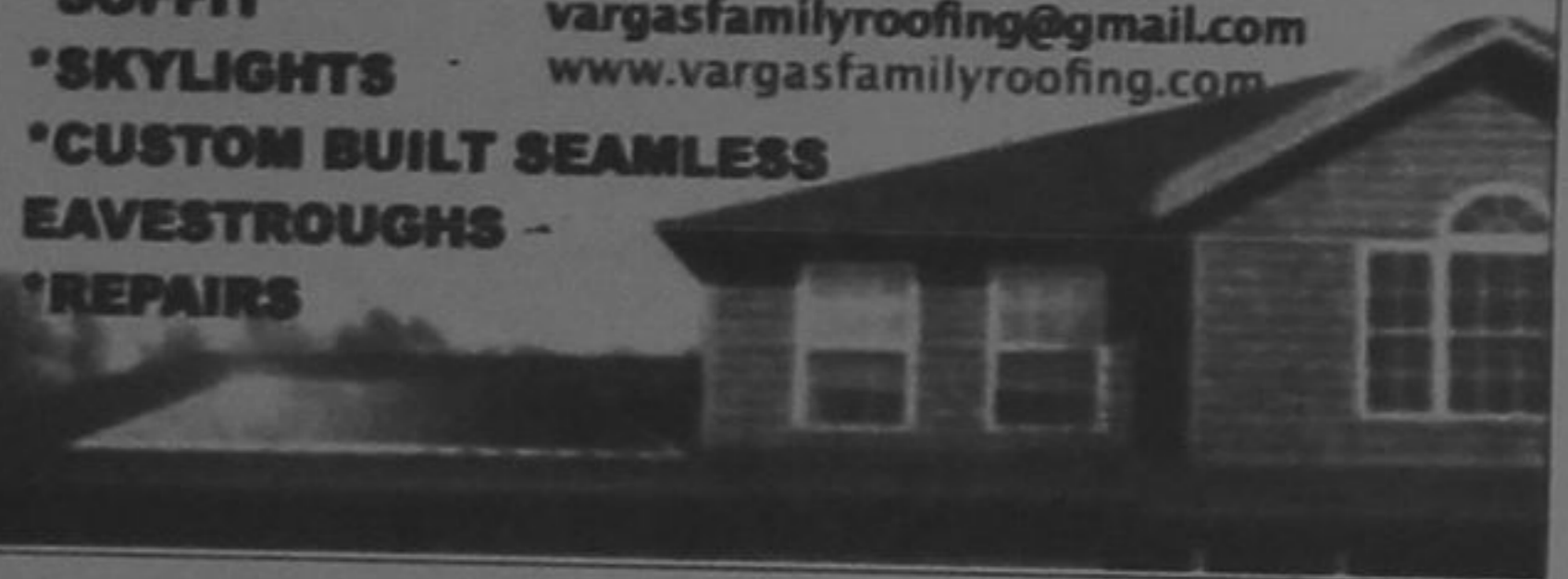
The Anniversary Ball is Markham Stouffville Hospital's biggest fundraiser of the year and proceeds will go towards the \$450,000 Meditech Oncology System for the new chemotherapy clinic.

Visit [gala.msh.on.ca](http://gala.msh.on.ca) for more information and to purchase tickets.

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball**  
Friday, April 17, 2015  
Hilton Suites Markham

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