

“Awesome – A Town That Cares”

Standing on the dusty floor of the still to be refurbished space that is to become the long awaited new home of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank on Ringwood Drive early in the morning of November 13, food bank co-ordinator Marion Wells was the picture of grateful astonishment. “My goodness!” she said. “I have just been blessed abundantly. I’ve waited 20 years for something like this.”

The long search for a new location that would allow this invaluable local institution to finally step into the 21st century had suddenly come to an end. No more endless stair climbing to bring food donations into the basement of Churchill Baptist Church in Ballantrae to be processed and sorted, taken back upstairs and off to storage facilities, only to eventually be brought back for distribution to food bank clients. Better still, clients in urban Stouffville, the

Town’s most heavily populated area, will now have much easier access to the food they depend upon.

General contractor Ron Carlton, who owns SMC Project Realization & Management, and dentist Nar Daljeet, who operates SmileVille Dental, both offered to rent out their adjoining units at far below market value to the food bank. Both currently run their businesses out of the same Ringwood Drive industrial strip that is to house the food bank. The two are bending over backwards to bring their combined 2,500 square foot facilities up to speed for Ms. Wells and her group of dedicated volunteers. According to food bank board member Doug McIntyre, the retired accountant and businessman who accompanied Ms. Wells as she received her early Christmas present at the unforgettable November 13 hand over, the cost of refurbishing a space

such as this to make it suitable for the food bank’s needs would normally be around \$200,000. But with the bulk of the set up being looked after by the owners, Mr. McIntyre estimates the cost to the food bank will be a modest \$25,000 - \$30,000. “We don’t want a Taj Mahal,” said Ms. Wells, whose group was named Whitchurch-Stouffville Citizens of the Year last July.

When Ms. Wells and Mr. McIntyre came to Town Council November 17 to request the Town’s assistance with the set up costs, they received unanimous support from Council and Town Staff and an assurance that the current budget process being undertaken by the Town for the upcoming year would be altered to incorporate some form of financial support. Mayor Almanna got the ball rolling by handing a jar of spaghetti sauce with a \$5,000 cheque from the Mayor’s Community Fund placed behind

the label. He then committed his family to a contribution of another \$2,400.

However, it was also acknowledged that the wheels of the bureaucracy are always a little slow to turn and that it could take a while to free up the financial help the Town is to contribute. So what better way for the many supporters of the food bank to help out than to offer up cash donations to assist with set up expenses? Such cheques should be made out to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank and mailed to:

Marion Wells,
13618 McCowan Rd.,
Stouffville, ON, L4A 7X5.

Ms. Wells told the Free Press that the headline for any newspaper story about the food bank’s new home should be “Awesome – A Town That Cares.” You’ve got it Marion!

Kate’s Column a Hit

Just had to let you folks at the Free Press know how very much I enjoyed Kate Gilderdale’s column in the November Free Press. I am a grandmother of seven and have encountered every situation she mentioned, time and time again. I laughed until I cried. I read it over numerous times and laughed just as much as reading it the first time. It was right up there with her column about purchasing and wearing heels at one of her children’s weddings. Keep up the good work Kate!!!

Colleen Ormson (a faithful reader)
Stouffville

Out In Write Field



Dreams Do Come True: Just Ask Jane Philpott

By Bruce Stapley

I caught up with Stouffville’s brightest shining star Jane Philpott just days after she was appointed Health Minister in the new Liberal government in November.

An ‘interview’ had been arranged at the Red Bulb Espresso Bar on Main Street. It became immediately obvious that the days of standing on the street chit chatting about what our kids were up to had come and gone. Jane’s Constituency Manager Julie Weiss made it clear we had to stick to a time limit as there were so many items that had to be checked off the newly minted Cabinet Minister’s ‘To Do’ list for that day.

I started by handing Jane a copy of the inaugural issue of the Free Press from December 2005, in which she had written our first ever feature story. It was a graphic account of an eight week medical mission she had completed that fall with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Niger, West Africa, caring for severely undernourished children in the

wake of a food crisis that put hundreds of thousands of little ones at risk of malnutrition and death.

I also gave her a bag of cookies made an hour earlier by Lisa Darchville, resident baker at Velvet Sunrise Coffee Roasters on Ringwood Drive. This was just in case Jane remembered how I had inadvertently implied she was a stay at home mom with nothing better to do than bake cookies all day upon first meeting her in the school yard at Summitview Public School when our sons were beginning grade one back in the late 1990’s. I wouldn’t want to find the Free Press on the outs as happened to many from the Fourth Estate with the previous federal government! Fortunately for me the incident had never crossed her mind.

Our discussion covered everything from what past life experiences she felt had prepared her for her new posting right through how she planned to juggle new responsibilities including riding duties, ministry workload and her contributions to the three

Cabinet committees to which she has also been appointed. She said she knew from the moment she was sworn in as Health Minister that she would face an intense schedule. “I will be busier than I have ever been in my life,” she said. “It’s a massive challenge, unique to the other challenges I have taken on. And I have taken on some daunting tasks in the past.”

Can she do it? According to Dr. Brian Cornelison, a former colleague who worked with Jane on a University of Toronto project to provide medical training in Ethiopia, the answer is a resounding ‘Yes.’

“She is very warm, gracious and optimistic,” Dr. Cornelison said in a November 4 story in the National Post. “But don’t mess with her. She is all that, but firm.” I asked her what her colleague was getting at with his warning not to take her lightly. “I would hope he meant that when given a task to do that I am blessed with a lot of determination.” She said she plans to use that same drive to ensure that all the big health care

Free Thoughts

It’s time again for the Snow Ball Gala! An evening of wonderful music, theatrical performances, gourmet food and dancing in support of The Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment - 19 on the Park. All of which Stanley tragically misinterpreted...



promises the Liberals committed to get implemented, pledges including increased availability of home care compensation, lower prescription drug costs, and the improvement of mental health care. “The Prime Minister has asked me to make sure that they all happen. I am determined not to let the people down.”

When I asked if she had any

idea she would be considered for the job as Health Minister, she insisted it came as a complete surprise. “I always had a dream that some day I would be given a responsibility such as this.”

The Right Honourable Jane Philpott, Canada’s Minister of Health, is living proof that if you dream big enough those dreams just might come to pass.

Stouffville Free Press

Whitchurch-Stouffville's Independent community owned newspaper

UP AND COMING

The Stouffville Free Press welcomes community event listings from non-profit groups and organizations. Please send a brief synopsis of upcoming events by email to stouffvillefreepress@rogers.com

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Mailing Address: 5758 Main St., Stouffville, Ontario L4A 2T1
 Phone: 905-640-FREE (3733)
 Editor: Bruce Stapley / stouffvillefreepress@bell.net
 Advertising Sales: Nicole Love / sales.stouffvillefreepress@gmail.com / 416-802-6716
 Edward Nelles / edward@thenellesgroup.com / 416-898-3887
 Graphics Department: Travis Merrick, Sheri Smith & Nicole Love / travis.merrick@sympatico.ca

Editorial and Photography Contributors:

Kate Gilderdale	Maurice Smith
Bruce Stapley	Ruth LeBlanc
Kinjal Dagli-Shah	Rob Reid
Hannelore Volpe	Dan Wigmore
Ben Embiricos	Carole Nelles
Jill McWhinnie	

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