

# Improv part of arts program at local high school

By Kate Gilderdale  
Stouffville This Month

Stouffville District Secondary School's improv program, now in its second year, is aimed at students who are interested in honing their theatrical skills.  
Teacher Jennifer

Goldman initiated the program and this year her students are participating in the Canadian Improv Games (CIG), which has its roots in Second City, and which has now become the largest theatre festival in Canada. For students like Ashley Croft and Scott Goldman, it's a welcome opportunity to pursue their

love of the performing arts. "I've been interested in acting for my entire life," said Ashley. "Throughout high school I've been involved in every drama production we've put on." Until recently, however, local opportunities for students interested in theatre were hard to find, said Scott. "I've always

liked the idea of acting. I took drama in Grade 8 and found that it came naturally to me."

The CIG website describes the games as "a loving competition between teams of high school students trained to perform spontaneous, improvised scenes. Over a thousand students in hundreds of high schools across Canada play in the Improv Games every year."

Since its inception, participation has grown from 24 Ottawa area high schools to over 250 high schools from Newfoundland to British Columbia. "We go around to other schools and have competitions and exchange matches, and meet to play games and

interact with one another," explained Ashley.

"I can see how it could be perceived as scary," added Scott, "but gets easier once you do it a few times. A lot depends on the suggestions (from the audience). Some ideas are workable, others are really difficult." It all comes down to working with one another and being confident, Ashley explained.

If they make the top three in their first competition, which takes place at Notre Dame in Ajax at the end of February, they will be eligible to move on to the Toronto final, "and if we win that we go to the national finals," said Scott. "We're going to do some workshops and

come up with sketches, which we will perform at our Arts Night in May," noted Ms. Goldman.

Because it combines arts with friendly competition, the program provides a good balance and appeals to a wider audience, said Scott. "It's something different for the school. Both of us are trying to get into university or college theatre programs, so this type of experience is very important." And with more arts-based courses on the curriculum, said Ashley, "people are becoming more interested in all aspects of the arts."

Look out for further details on the SDSS Arts Night in upcoming issues of *Stouffville This Month*.



Sandy Brailey of Claremont (second left) receives the Sweetheart Award from Curves for Women on Feb. 14. Sandy, who has lost more than 60 lbs since she joined Curves in 1991, was presented with a beautiful bouquet of pink roses and a cheque for \$1,000 U.S. from Sandy Higgs (left) for beating out contenders across Canada. She will also be featured on a poster which will be distributed to all 4,000 clubs. Joining the celebration are member Melodie MacCharles and owner Wendy McMillan.

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