

There's no place like home sweet home

By Nancy Hopkins
Stouffville This Month

Dedicated Habitat for Humanity York Region volunteer John Volpe holds the Whitchurch-Stouffville

community in high regard. The first donation of money the group received was the result of a fundraiser held during the Strawberry Festival three years ago. Mr. Volpe also

recalls the welcome given by Mayor Wayne Emmerson as he hosted one of the group's first meetings with all the local councillors in attendance. Since then, the volunteer said, he has continued to be astounded by the level of generosity he has encountered.

Habitat for Humanity constructs well-built, affordable homes for people in need and in this way "helps people who help themselves." At the core of the organization is its fundamental dedication to eliminating substandard housing and homelessness worldwide.

The families who live in these homes complete an application and personally invest 500 hours of "sweat equity" in the construction of their home. According to Mr. Volpe, "It is a hand up, not a hand out, and people need to know that the homes are not free" to the resident.

Applicants must be employed and purchase the home through a mortgage determined by their income. The home is then built solely through the effort of volunteers and the generosity of individuals and businesses in the community.

When a community sets up a new Habitat for Humanity chapter it takes, on average, 18 months to build the first house. Within eight months of its inception, York Region built its first home on Gorham St. on unused road allowance land donated by the Town of Newmarket.

A family with two young

disabled children moved into the home in Sept. 2002, while Sept. 14, 2003 saw the unveiling of a second Habitat home on

involvement of former United States President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalyn brought the organization a higher profile.

only on the building site, but also behind the scenes and in fundraising and awareness initiatives. Corporations have found



Kenwood Rd. in Keswick. The organization is gaining momentum and next year holds the potential for the completion of three or four additional houses.

With the construction of 150,000 houses in over 2,000 communities around the globe, Habitat for Humanity is one of the largest construction companies in the world, but holds the unique distinction of being a not-for-profit group. There are 60 chapters across Canada alone.

In 1965, Millard and Linda Fuller of Alabama visited a farming community in Georgia founded by farmer and biblical scholar Clarence Jordan. Named Koinonia Farm, it served as the inspiration for their concept of "partnership housing". In 1984, the

Habitat for Humanity is a Christian-based organization but is completely ecumenical and no one is turned down on the basis of religion. Mr. Volpe and his wife Danielle, volunteer site builder on the Gorham St. project, are passionately dedicated to the work of Habitat and their enthusiasm continues to grow.

They have personally witnessed how communities have been drawn together during a 'build', and encourage people in Stouffville to embrace this opportunity. "There are tons of things that need to be done in York Region," said Mr. Volpe, and anyone who is touched by the concept of Habitat for Humanity can become involved and help out.

Help is needed not

their involvement to be a strong team building experience. Mr. Volpe encourages families who wish to investigate a home building partnership with Habitat for Humanity to contact them, and there is no charge to apply. He pointed out that the most urgent need is obtaining usable building lots.

Habitat for Humanity can be reached by telephone at 905-713-2245 and their website, www.habitatforhumanityyorkregion.ca, provides an excellent source of information. Mr. Volpe asks us to think about how we feel about our home and how important it is to us, and realize that the work of Habitat for Humanity "brings a sense of dignity to people and brings them out of nasty situations."

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NO DEAL! By Randy Mole, Mayoral Candidate

Our present mayor and his council have decided that you have to live with backup beepers and construction noise and dust from 6am to 6pm, six days a week for the next 10 to 15 years. **NO DEAL!**

My opponents here were in a position to prevent this and the destruction of the Stouffville Creek Valley, and our best woodlot, the Harper Hoover Woods. They chose consistently to vote for the developers wishes, not for the secondary plan and not to protect your interest!

Do you want to bring up children in a polluted dust bowl? Do you want to live here? What do you think of this council's respect for your investment here?

When Mr. Pliakes says he wants all this industry here, he is doing the Developers bidding. Translated that means more construction, noise and pollution, dump trucks and delays, traffic congestion and noise from dawn to dusk. Will Mrs. Sherban follow the same party line? I believe so.

They sold you out to the developers and didn't even bother to get your informed consent because you would not have given it. They denied you the vision of our secondary plan, your Vision of a Small Country Town. They Misled you. Prevented you from knowing the details and showed you no respect. Ten more years of this Ernie? I think not!

If this is the way they do business in the town, this is the way they do business in the country! **NO DEAL!**

Construction will be contained between the hours of 8 and 5, five days a week. Eight hours a day, subject to fines. We will seek an alternative to the Backup Beeper warning system. We will not be disturbed in our serenity, our sleep. We will not jeopardize the health of our children, seniors and adults. We did not contemplate this type of development. It is not consistent with the Vision of our Secondary Plan. It will destroy the health and serenity of a peaceful country town. It will cause tension anxiety and disease. We cannot allow this. **NO DEAL!**

We will re-examine the subdivision proposals in the light of our needs, our vision and the needs for a sustainable natural environment because, if we have a sustainable environment, we will have a sustainable economy. They go hand-in-hand. Without one we don't have the other. Our economy is our environment. Our water, our farmland, our woods, streams, wetlands, we need them all. We're sitting on the beach (Oakridge) here, just enjoy it. And it was the beachhead in the struggle for environmental issues in this province. From Walkerton to the Oakridge's Moraine to our health-care. It is time we emphasize the important issues here. The important issues aren't how rich we can be. We are all extremely rich in comparison to the rest of the world. No, the important issue is how clean we can be. Because that will be the measure of how good a job we have done here.

"Just imagine the last two years never happened, that we were still some small town, rather than a Pawn in some Construction Game.

I know why you live here.
I know what you want.
I know what you feel."

Randy Mole