NOVEMBER 2026 NO. 98

On the Road

A STOUFFVILLE MAGAZINE



A Little Magic Goes a Long Way

Behind the red velvet suit is a heartwarming story of generosity, cherished traditions and the joy of giving back to Stouffville.

Stouffville

Game On!

Stouffville's new Sports Hall of Fame launches online.

Holiday Event Guide

Your guide to holiday events and seasonal fun.

Honouring Veterans

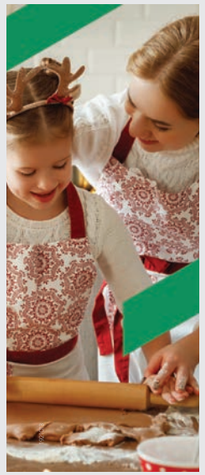
A new tank memorial arrives at the museum.

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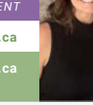
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Happy Holidays

May you find joy in the little things this holiday season and know that my team and I are here to support you.



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From the Editor

There's something special about Stouffville during the holidays, and this edition of *On the Road* celebrates that feeling!

Our Holiday Events Guide is a great place to start, with a look at what's happening around town throughout the season. Check it out on page 24. Jim Mason also introduces Stouffville's new Sports Hall of Fame, a new initiative celebrating our community's rich sporting history. That story starts on page 6.

And, of course, we couldn't have a holiday edition without Santa Claus. Cassandra Papas caught up with the big guy on page 18 for a fun seasonal profile and a look at the familiar face behind the red suit.

As another year comes to a close, Mayor Lovatt shares his year-end message with the community.

So, grab a hot chocolate, settle in and enjoy this holiday edition of *On the Road*.

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Stouffville Medical Arts Building Opens Its Doors

by Adriana Barbary



The new Stouffville Medical Arts Building at 211 Sam Miller Way. Below: Dr. Larry Chen and his son Dr. Ryan Chen.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RYAN CHEN

Long before he became a family physician, Dr. Ryan Chen regularly visited Stouffville for archery and horseback riding. Now he's back for good. On October 1st, Dr. Ryan and his father, Dr. Larry Chen, celebrated the official opening of the Stouffville Medical Arts Building at 211 Sam Miller Way, just behind Walmart, joined by Mayor Iain Lovatt, members of Council, Town staff, and project partners.

The four-storey, roughly 40,000 square foot building, is the result of a long-shared dream. Dr. Larry, a chemistry PhD and researcher, may have hoped his son would follow him into the lab, but Dr. Ryan chose medicine instead. The two always talked about creating a healthcare facility of their own one day.

When they began searching for space, they pictured a place that reassures patients the moment they walk in, with natural light, bright open spaces, easy access, and, most importantly, easy parking. They couldn't find it, so they decided to build it. "How hard could it be?" Dr. Ryan remembers thinking. As it turned out, quite hard.

Stouffville was a natural choice. Dr. Ryan saw a growing community without a modern medical facility, and many of his patients are referred to Markham or Newmarket for specialty care. He said there is "no better setting than Stouffville" for the project. It's a meaningful vote of confidence, bringing private investment, jobs, and healthcare professionals to town.

Mayor Lovatt described the facility as more than bricks and mortar, representing access to care, strong local services, and a commitment to residents' well-being. He also noted it could help ease pressure on the emergency department at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

The ceremony also recognized behind-the-scenes work. Brandon Slopack, the Town's Senior Planner, helped guide the application through the approvals process after joining the Town in 2023. Mayor and Council acknowledged his contributions, though he credited the wider group: "This was truly a team effort."

Designed exclusively for healthcare, the building still has units available for lease as tenants are onboarded. Confirmed services include urgent care, a pharmacy, a dentist, an audiologist, an optometrist, and a cosmetic clinic. Dr. Ryan's Empyrea Medical Centre, on the fourth floor, opens this fall and is accepting new patients, with plans to recruit at least six family physicians. Patients can register at **empyreamedical.ca**

2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION WINNERS

STOUFFVILLE VOTES

MAYOR

Iain Lovatt (Acclaimed)

COUNCIL

WARD 1: Hugo Kroon

WARD 2: Jared Simpson

WARD 3: Bryan Stott

WARD 4: Erik Gordon

WARD 5: Richard Bartley

WARD 6: Sue Sherban

School Trustee Results

ENGLISH PUBLIC

Emma Sears

ENGLISH SEPARATE

Brandan James Cescolini

FRENCH PUBLIC

Hanane Jaouich-Diakité (Acclaimed)

FRENCH SEPARATE

Christella Basolisa Lome

See the full details of election results at **stouffvillevotes.ca**

A New Place to Remember:
Stouffville's Leopard 1 C2 Tank Monument

by Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum Staff



Above: The Leopard 1 C2 tank was set in place at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum & Community Centre on October 28th and officially unveiled on November 7th.



Above: The Leopard 1 C2 tank, an upgraded variant of the Leopard 1 tank, served as the primary battle tank for the Canadian Forces from 1999 until its retirement in 2017.

Something new arrived at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Vandorf Community Park this fall, and it's hard to miss.

Earlier this November, a retired Canadian Forces Leopard 1 C2 tank took its place as a permanent and meaningful monument, honouring the experiences of Canadian veterans and commemorating the contributions of residents during times of conflict. The monument creates a space where residents can learn about Canada's military history while taking a moment to reflect on those who have served.

At the tank monument site, visitors will also be able to engage with educational panels developed by the Museum. These panels will be a permanent part of the Monument and will explore several topics, including the historical diversity of the Canadian military, peacekeeping, the home front, and more.

The Museum has also developed educational programs centred on the Ontario Social Studies and History curriculum for students in grades 5 through 12. Using the Leopard 1 C2 Tank Monument's primary source materials, and hands-on artifacts, these programs will engage students in topics including Canada's role in the First and Second World Wars, Peacekeeping and Home Front efforts, acts of Remembrance, and introduce students to real-life examples of local Stouffville veterans.

Members of the public were invited to attend the dedication ceremony on Saturday, November 7th. The event included a ceremony followed by a reception in the Museum's Main Hall. During that time, visitors were encouraged to visit the exhibit, *Worthy: The History of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps*, on loan from the Canadian Tank Museum.

The Leopard 1 C2 Tank Monument is a place where families can stop and reflect, where students can learn something new, and where visitors can take a moment to remember. It will also complement the many other ways our community remembers and honours those who have served.

Residents can explore the stories of local veterans year-round through the Town's We Remember initiative at **townofws.ca/weremember**

Explore the stories of local veterans

Visit the Leopard 1 C2 Tank Monument

Vandorf Community Park · 14698 Woodbine Ave.

townofws.ca/weremember

PHOTOS BY ADRIANA BARBARY

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THE NEW STOUFFVILLE SPORTS HALL OF FAME HAS GONE Digital

BY JIM MASON



Stouffville Sports Hall of Fame committee members, from left: Jim Mason, Peter Harmsen, Mike Humphreys, Cindy McNeil and Kym Pyke (missing: Kate Stover and Jodi McGuirk).

Sometimes great ideas take decades to come to fruition.

Approximately 60 years ago, Jim Thomas, then the editor of the *Stouffville Tribune* newspaper, suggested during a Stouffville Library board meeting that the municipality establish a sports hall of fame.

Thomas, who cut his teeth in journalism as a sportswriter in Stouffville in 1949, knew the town's athletic past like the back of his baseball glove. And he knew of other similar-sized communities that already had sports shrines.

"The committee chair, while surprised, set his agenda aside and placed the request before membership," Thomas, now 97, recalls. "After a lengthy discussion, it was unanimously approved. Unfortunately, nothing followed."

Fast forward 30 years…

In the mid-1990s, the late Mary Humphreys spent three consecutive summers hunched over microfiche files, scrolling through decades of archived Stouffville newspapers and documents.

A retired teacher who loved history and taught computer courses to teachers at York University was hunting in the Stouffville Library files for stories – the kind that don't make headlines twice, the tales of athletes and coaches and builders whose contributions to community sports might otherwise be forgotten.

Humphreys wasn't just looking for national champions or gold medalists. She was looking for Stouffville's sporting soul. Her research of newspapers, microfiche, photographs, and records dating from 1888 to 1986 preserved an important part of Stouffville's heritage.

Her son, Stouffville's Mike Humphreys, also had a vision. He thought the homework assignment could produce files for a local hall of fame. The former president and coach with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association and board member with the Stouffville Spirit Jr. A team, Mike is a former Stouffville Sports Person of the Year.

"As we travelled to other communities for sports, I saw how people had stepped up to create their own sports halls of fame," he told *OTR*. "I often wondered how a community like ours, with so many dedicated athletes, coaches, builders and volunteers, could not have one of its own."

That quiet archival work put in by Mary Humphreys, supported in part by a grant from then Mayor Wayne Emmerson's charity golf tournament fund, planted a seed that would lie dormant for nearly 30 years. But seeds have a way of germinating when conditions are right.

In 2024, that seed finally bloomed.

Inspired by her now-late father, Kate Stover had a deep-seeded love for Stouffville's sports history. Her dad, former Stouffville councillor, Stouffville Citizen, and Sports Person of the Year Cliff Dunkeld, helped pioneer girls' hockey and women's softball in Stouffville during the early 1970s. Stover, a multi-sport athlete herself, rekindled the idea of creating a hall of fame in 2024. She asked the question: "Why doesn't Stouffville have a sports hall of fame?"

Stover, who now lives in cottage country, in Carnarvon, was also motivated by her local Haliburton Highlands Sports Hall of Fame. Officials with the hall, located inside the arena in Haliburton, shared their story of founding the institution in 2018 and the procedures they follow to induct members.

Stover reached out to longtime Stouffville friend Jodi McGuirk. They approached Mike Humphreys about reigniting the Stouffville Hall of Fame flame.

The hall's management committee was soon formed. The other members are Stouffville residents:

- Cindy McNeil, a former skater and coach with the Stouffville Skating Club and a member of the Stouffville Terry Fox Run committee
- Transplanted Australian Kym Pyke, the president of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association, which celebrated its 60th anniversary this year
- Peter Harmsen, the president of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, who leads Stouffville's Kids First Fund.
- *OTR* sports columnist Jim Mason, a director with the Stouffville Spirit and the former editor of the *Stouffville Sun-Tribune.*

Members drafted a constitution, outlined the organizational framework and held their first official meeting in October 2024.

Within months, they'd secured their domain. William Poulter, then a student at Stouffville District Secondary School, was selected to design the official logo, ensuring that even the visual identity reflected community collaboration.

Tragically, William, who was attending Durham College, died in a car accident last month. His work for the hall of fame will be recognized during April's induction ceremony.

In March 2025, the committee began the serious work of website development. Rather than outsourcing to an external firm, the hall reached out to Mohawk College's School of Technology, Software Development program. It proved to be a perfect partnership.

A project proposal was submitted in September 2025. The response was immediate and enthusiastic. By January 2026, after presenting at a Software Engineering Q&A Night, the Hall of Fame was selected by a student capstone development team.

"When we were first talking about the website, it was obviously the largest budget line item, right? So, our concern was, how do we build the funds to build the website before we have anything to show to sponsors?" said McGuirk, who spoke glowingly of the hall's relationship with the Hamilton-based college. "The main thing that appealed (to Mohawk) about our project was that it was community-based – they really liked that feel."

Four students – Hope Hemingway, Matthieu Laroche, Oceanna Hartog and Simon Nemes – took ownership of the project. Beginning in February 2026, they partnered with the Management Committee to build a sophisticated virtual Hall of Fame that would serve as the digital home for Stouffville's sporting legacy.

The hall and its website went public this week.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIM MASON







From left: Committee chairperson Mike Humphreys; members Jodi McGuirk and Kate Stover; and committee inspiration Mary Humphreys.

NOMINATE YOUR SPORTS HEROES

Stouffville is making and celebrating history, and your voice matters. Nominations are now being accepted for the inaugural class of the Stouffville Sports Hall of Fame, a celebration of the athletes, coaches, and builders who have shaped this town's athletic legacy and inspired generations of young sportspeople.

Who Should You Nominate?

- Players who competed at high levels and brought pride to our community
- Coaches who shaped young athletes on and off the ice or field
- Builders and organizers who established programs and facilities
- Community supporters who championed athletic development
- Officials and volunteers whose dedication strengthened our sports culture
- Athletes with local roots who achieved excellence elsewhere but remain connected to Stouffville

Your nomination could honour someone who played decades ago or someone more recent.

Where to Nominate

Visit the official nomination portal

What Happens Next

All nominations will be reviewed by a selection committee that will evaluate each candidate's contributions, achievements, and impact on Stouffville's sports community. The committee will announce the first class of the Stouffville Sports Hall of Fame at a celebration event in April.









A Living Monument

The result is a virtual Hall of Fame, accessible to anyone, anywhere, anytime. No geographic boundaries. No physical limitations. Just stories, preserved, searchable, and permanent.

A physical hall of fame residents can visit in person is still possible. Town of Stouffville officials have mentioned the possibility of including space for the hall in the next recreation complex the municipality builds.

The Hall's mission is straightforward:

- **To recognize and honour the achievements** of individuals and teams who have attained prominence in sports and those who have made major contributions to sports development in Stouffville.
- **To permanently record, publicly display, and preserve** the history of sport in the community.
- **To hold events** that recognize and celebrate inductees.
- **To raise funds** to support the Hall's ongoing work.

Spring 2027: The Inaugural Class

This spring, the Stouffville Sports Hall of Fame will induct its first official class.

Rather than existing solely in the virtual realm, the inaugural induction will be celebrated with an in-person ceremony in Stouffville in April at Stouffville Branch 459 of the Royal Canadian Legion.

"The time has come; it's long overdue," said Jim Thomas. "Stouffville deserves a Sports Hall of Fame, a site to honour community athletes past and present who, over the years, have honoured this community. And hopefully well into the future."

PHOTOS FROM TOP:

Stouffville Girls' Baseball Team, 1952

Stouffville 4th division relay team, July 1917, Canadian Corps

Ringwood Hockey Club, 1915

Stouffville District High School, Girls' Broomball Team, 1947-48

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Hall of Fame is open to nominations. If you know someone whose contributions to Stouffville sports deserve recognition, you can submit a nomination through the website.

xhg.dpn.mybluehost.me

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE MUSEUM. FROM TOP: #R998.003.001, #2014.018.013, #981.087.006, #R998.125.001.



Stouffville's historic destination for performing arts

stained glass centre



Photo by Roger Carlsen

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Stouffville Moves



by Susan Tucker
OTRtipoff@outlook.com

Stouffville is a town that moves. It moves to the trailhead at the crack of dawn, to the rink under Friday night lights, to the golf course on a borrowed afternoon, and through all the school runs. Keeping a place like this moving takes more than good intentions or a single gym membership. It takes a full loop: someone to diagnose and fix what is broken, someone to build and maintain what is strong, and someone to give the body the recovery that training and rehabilitation alone cannot supply.

This is that system, laid out end to end. It shows where each business's work ends and the next begins, and why the handoff itself is the point.

STAGE ONE

Recover: The Rehab Grid

Where an injury first gets a clear diagnosis and a practical plan. The Rehab Grid offers physiotherapy, sports performance training, and neurofunctional acupuncture with a single focus: getting your body working correctly again, not simply quieter. Their guiding line is straightforward: "Know better. Move better. Feel better."

For many people, the first visit comes after something has already gone wrong, like a flare-up that will not settle, a shoulder, a knee, or maybe an ankle. The process begins with assessment and education. Clients gain a clearer understanding of why the problem started and how to keep it from returning. That knowledge becomes the foundation for everything that follows.

STAGE TWO

Build: Nock Academy

Where strength is deliberately built and then protected. Nock Academy functions as a health and fitness hub offering yoga, Pilates, barre, and personal training, available both in person and online. The programming is designed for busy parents, professionals with limited windows, people who need options that fit around work and family rather than the other way around. Their simple ambition is "a fitter, healthier town."

Once the acute problem is under control, the body needs progressive loading and consistent practice if the gains are to stick. Nock Academy supplies that next phase. The result is not a temporary fitness spike but a higher baseline of capacity, so the same resident who once needed rehabilitation now has more resilience against the next setback.

STAGE THREE

Restore: Corner Spa + Wellness

Where the body receives the rest and soft tissue care that hard training and clinical rehab do not fully cover. Corner Spa + Wellness provides registered massage therapy, osteopathy, and a range of holistic treatments in a space the owners describe as built on care and community. They are clear about their identity: "Not your typical spa."

Recovery is not complete when the pain is gone or the strength numbers look better. Corner Spa supplies the third piece. Massage and osteopathic work help maintain the gains made at the other two locations and reduce the chance that small imbalances turn into larger problems. The atmosphere is intentionally communal, another expression of the same local mindset that runs through the other two businesses.

Same Town. Same Resident. Three Handoffs.

Consider a familiar scenario. A runner develops a flare-up that starts limiting mileage and daily comfort. The first stop is The Rehab Grid; assessment, treatment, and education give the runner tools to manage the issue. When the acute phase settles, onward to Nock Academy. Strength work, mobility sessions, and structured training rebuild capacity and reduce the likelihood of recurrence. Next up, Corner Spa provides the soft tissue and restorative care that keeps the system from tightening up again.

Three separate visits. Three distinct businesses. One continuous process for a single resident who never falls through a gap between them. Therapists, trainers, and practitioners already understand that their work is more effective when the next piece is available and competent.

Treating "keeping Stouffville moving" as more than a convenient tagline is simply an accurate description of what already happens here. Our active culture, trails, rinks, courses, school runs, and weekend sports, all create demand for this kind of coordinated support. These three businesses answer that demand from different angles and form a practical continuum of care.

The value of making the loop visible is practical. Residents who understand the sequence can move through it more deliberately. Someone recovering from injury knows strength work is the logical next step. Someone building fitness understands that periodic soft-tissue care is not an indulgence but maintenance. Someone seeking restoration can see it as part of a larger pattern of staying capable rather than an isolated treat.

Stouffville does not need to invent a new health culture; it already has the pieces. The Rehab Grid recovers function. Nock Academy builds and protects capacity. Corner Spa restores the tissues and systems that keep everything working. Together they form a quiet infrastructure that helps residents stay on their feet, in motion, and ready for whatever the next season brings.

Get moving, Stouffville!

1. **The Rehab Grid**
   - 37 Sandiford Dr.
   - therehabgrid.com
2. **The Nock Academy**
   - 10 Commercial St.
   - thenockacademy.com
3. **Corner Spa + Wellness**
   - 6361 Main St.
   - cornerspaandwellness.ca



PHOTO BY ANDREW TSANG

Leading by Listening

Year-End Reflections from Mayor Iain Lovatt

by Ruby Vasanthan

Mayor Iain Lovatt is the first to acknowledge that he doesn't have all the answers, but he has always been committed to ensuring residents receive the information and answers they deserve, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of Town staff.

He firmly believes that people on all sides of a difficult decision deserve to be heard, respected, and treated with the same care and consideration, regardless of whether they agree with the outcome. For the Mayor, openness, accessibility, and transparency are not simply ideals, but fundamental principles that guide his approach to leadership and public service.

Stouffville's Largest Park Yet

One of the year's proudest moments came as a gift. Magna International donated Simeon Park, its 95-acre private retreat, to the Town. For more than four decades, the property was enjoyed by Magna employees. Soon it will belong to everyone as Stouffville's largest public park, with a lake, trails, and an outdoor pool. The Mayor is already thinking about what the park will mean for families for generations to come.

A Downtown in Transformation

Main Street is changing, and the Mayor believes the wait will be worth it. This year brought the Urban Plaza, the start of construction on the Civic Square expansion, and the launch of the downtown revitalization. The expanded square will add approximately 400 square metres of space for community gatherings and signature events. New investment is already lining up behind the work. The Mayor's commitment is to see it through and leave a Main Street "that will be ours for generations."

A Home for Every Stage of Life

Housing affordability sits at the heart of the Mayor's priorities. The Town's Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan, approved by Council in late 2025 and funded through the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, began delivering results this year. Grants now help landowners create affordable rental units and multiplexes, and affordable rental projects can receive fee waivers of up to 100 per cent. For the Mayor, the goal is clear. A young adult moving out for the first time, a growing family, and a senior hoping to stay close to loved ones should all be able to call Stouffville home.

Events the World Is Noticing

What started as ideas have become traditions that draw thousands to town. The Holiday Market, the multi-purpose trail, and Symphony Under the Stars all grew from the Mayor's belief that Stouffville deserved its own signature experiences. This year, the rest of the world took notice again. In February, the Stouffville Main Street 5K and the Stouffville Strawberry Festival each received a *Top 100 Award* from Festivals and Events Ontario. This fall brought three international honours:

- **1** **Gold – Best Overall Sponsorship Program**
- **3** **Bronze – Best Overall Entertainment Program:** Stouffville Ribfest
- **3** **Bronze – Best Event/ Program Within an Event to Benefit a Cause:** Stouffville Main Street 5K benefitting the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation

Investing in Those Behind the Work

The Mayor's commitment to people extends inside Town Hall. Shortly after he was first elected as mayor in 2018, he asked the Town's HR team a simple question: what would it take for Stouffville to be named one of Canadian HR Reporter's Best Places to Work? The answer was not a single initiative but years of steady, often unseen effort to build a supportive workplace. In 2026, that effort earned the Town the recognition for the third consecutive year. It is a reminder that some of the most meaningful achievements happen without a ribbon cutting.

Leading by Listening

The Mayor is the first to say he doesn't have all the answers. "I'm still one vote," he said. He credits residents with teaching him to listen, and he believes people on every side of a hard decision deserve the same care and consideration.

That openness extends to the next generation. Through the Youth Advisory Working Group and a partnership with York University, young residents are helping shape decisions long before they buy a first home. "We don't know what we don't know," the Mayor said. "We can think everything's great for a 20-year-old. And I've learned it's not."

The Road Ahead

If he could speak to himself on his first day in office, the Mayor would offer three pieces of advice: trust your gut, be slow to speak and quick to listen, and be patient.

Looking a decade ahead, he pictures "a town that is full of very happy families," and a community that can look back on everything it built together and say, "We did that."

Mayor Lovatt thanks the residents, staff, volunteers, and partners who made 2026 such a memorable year, and he looks forward to building on that momentum in the term ahead.



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From Art to Words:
Stouffville Contest Names Its Winners

by Glenn Jackson

Back in the April edition of *On the Road*, we introduced readers to Stouffville's Ekphrastic Writing Contest, a creative challenge inviting writers to turn inspiration from visual art into poetry and prose. Organized by The Inklings Adult Writing Group, the contest invited participants to respond to one of four artworks selected from the Latcham Art Centre's 2026 Juried Exhibition. Now, the results are in.

The winning works bring the contest's creative conversation between art and writing full circle, showing how a single image can inspire an entirely new story, voice, or perspective. All three winning entries are printed here for readers to enjoy.





Above: Feng Zhou's "Erupting Volcanoes, Frozen Waterfalls." Right: Carlos Fentanes' "Urn."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF INKLINGS WRITING GROUP

1 ***TIE FOR FIRST PLACE – POETRY***

How to Become a Fossil Before Dying

by Julia Khan - based on Feng Zhou's "Erupting Volcanoes, Frozen Waterfalls."

God, the world is too heavy for a coat.
We learn the frost by its proper name:
a mouth that takes without chewing.
To be small right now is to be a match
struck inside a collapsing lung—all this sudden light
and nowhere for the smoke to go.

They told us the earth was an anchor,
but it is only a tooth loosening in the gum.
We don't get to grow into our skin;
we just stiffen into the frame.

Listen—the ice is moving faster than the clock.
By the time you look up from the fire,
the boy you left by the river is already
a pillar of salt, already the hard, gray stone
the future will dig up just to see
how long it took for the warmth to leave us.

1 ***FIRST PLACE – PROSE***

Penelope's Soliloquy

by Mary Ann Mckenzie – based on Carlos Fentanes' "Urn."

My mother was driving me. It was Rosedale Valley, I think. There were happy people walking their dogs under huge, old cooling trees. It was the day I'd been fighting with the robots sending me link after link. It wasn't working anymore. The Visa… The Chatr… My spirits possessed me, controlled me. It was hot.

I am not what you see, not who you think I am. Once, men used to approach me on the street. They said I was beautiful. I was a cellist then. My hand was sliced when I broke that window. It was his fault.

Everything changed the night I fell to the ground on the sidewalk in the Annex…Or maybe it was the Junction? Some kind women took me to the hospital. Had I had a stroke? For five nights afterwards, I wandered the streets. It was then that the entities took unrelenting hold. They had found a home in me and greedily latched on.

Can you not hear how this voice I am using is not my own? Can you see how my body is weaving back and forth here, as I try to walk in a straight line? This isn't me. I am not what you see. I try to protect the people around me from the assault on my body. What is happening to me? I move to the middle of the road and walk in the busy traffic. I weave in and out of cars. In the hospital, where the kind policeman has taken me, I wait. People can be very kind. But they can be evil too.

I'm sorry, mother. This isn't me. I am not what you see. I love you so much. Do you forgive me?

When I made my way to the viaduct that night, I was afraid. They took me home after they called you. Do you remember?

Look! The demons are possessing me. Can you see their disgusting faces? Listen… Ok. Ok. Awh…Awh...ok, ok, ok…

I think about that day we were ambling along in the sun together, you and I. It was beautiful. You held your take-out coffee in your hand. I think it was from Dough. I loved those times with you. We'd go into Allen's. I asked you if I should be going into a psychiatric facility…how I would be judged in heaven…There are some good doctors too, I do know that. But they treated me terribly when I was there. I loved when you set the table that way that time, for dinner. I loved the cutlery and the smell of the pizzas. Remember how I said grace and I gave you a hug?

I used to smile a lot. I don't like it that I don't. I love you so much.

1 *TIE FOR FIRST PLACE – POETRY*

Vessel

by Mary Findlater – based on Carlos Fentanes' "Urn."

By day she weaves.
The loom is real—wood worn slick where
hands repeat, thread drawn through thread
until it obeys.
Over and under.
Over, under.

Fibre resists, then yields.
Tension holds.
Her fingers follow the same small path again
and again until they no longer feel like hers.
The cloth grows firm beneath her—something
that will last, something that will be taken
and kept.
She does not ask by whom.
Use is enough.
—
By night she unweaves.
Not the cloth—never that.
Something closer.
She sits with herself as if she were left open,
creased from handling,
still holding the shape of what pressed
into her.

A container—thin in places,
marked by use,
made to carry and give back.

She lifts the first thread—not from the loom
but from the day's claim on her.
It slips to the floor.

Another follows.
The pattern loosens, edges fraying their grip.
She pulls free the names,
the small yeses, the hours that settled into her
body and held firm.

They gather on the ground now without
weight.
Something like ash.
Something used through.
She stands when filled.
She sags when emptied.
Hands go in without pause,
take what they came for,
leave her slack, marked,
no longer needed.

Her face persists—grain by grain—fixed to
the surface, watching.
Thread loosens in her.
Over becomes under becomes nothing that
holds.
If she unravels far enough there is no pattern
left to return to,
nothing finished enough to be taken.
Only this—this slackening,
this giving way, this shape that remains after
the holding stops.
—
By morning she is back at the loom.
Wood. Fibre. Pull.
Over and under.
Over, under.
Her hands remember first.
The cloth takes form—tight, certain, ready to
leave her.
She keeps working.

And what remains of her when the day is
done—fine, grey, unthreaded—is gathered
into something that holds its shape.

POSE: My Portrait of a Senior Experience

by Dina Simon, Contributor



In February, Jennifer Onlock, Director of Latcham Art Centre, approached me to join a committee for a new project developed by seniors, for seniors. Having worked with Latcham for over five years, I had every confidence that anything they asked me to join would be exciting, so I said yes immediately! I became one of three committee members along with Kathy Clark and Joanna Parry.

Our objective was to develop the project and facilitate a 2.5-day workshop: 20 non-traditional portraits of seniors, using different mediums, collaged within a silhouette that reflects who they are in their hearts and heads. Our goal was to change the perceptions of what a senior is. We were both excited and overwhelmed!

We hit the road running! First, we recruited the senior participants. We selected diverse individuals aged 55 to 95.

Next, we began our creative exploration during the summer months to build the project. We were in the studio creating away like Santa's elves, experimenting with colours and mediums. Once our silhouettes were created, we were ready for everyone to strike a POSE!

At the start of the workshop, participants stated they felt "apprehensive, nervous, and terrified." By the end of the workshop, new and old connections were made, and excitement and pride replaced their fears.

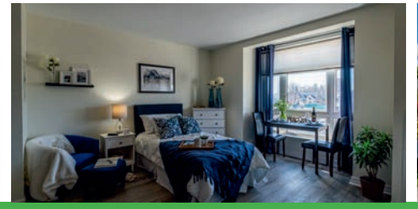
Youth volunteers joined the workshop on day two, and I was so impressed with how they engaged with the seniors. There were smiles all around. Over lunch, it reminded me of kids at a school cafeteria!

Many special moments came up, but a highlight was watching two high school friends meet again after almost 50 years and seeing a 20-year age difference give one senior renewed hope for her creative future! Reflections included "exceeded expectations", "a renewed confidence" and "gave me the freedom to be myself."

Calling it a labour of love would be an understatement. It enriched and inspired us all.

You don't want to miss seeing these portraits at the Stouffville Library from October 16th to November 12th, 2026, and at Town Hall from November 13th, 2026, to January 29th, 2027.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LATCHAM ART CENTRE


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the man BEHIND the Magic

by Cassandra Papas

For 21 years, a familiar face at the Town of Stouffville has been quietly keeping the spirit of Christmas alive, one wish, one smile, and one act of kindness at a time.

There's something unmistakable about Santa Claus.

Perhaps it's the rich red velvet suit, the snowy white beard or that familiar twinkle in his eyes. Or perhaps it's the remarkable way he can make even the most grown-up among us feel, if only for a moment, like a child on Christmas morning.

I remember the first time Santa Claus greeted me by name. There he stood, in all his Christmas glory, with a little glitter catching the light on his cheek and a knowing sparkle in his eyes.

He knew exactly who I was. The trouble was, I had absolutely no idea who he was.

As it turns out, the man beneath the beard was someone I already knew. A colleague, in fact. For 21 years, he's been a familiar face within the Town of Stouffville's Development Services department. But when the holiday season draws near, he trades his everyday responsibilities for Christmas wishes, and his workday wardrobe for a rather magnificent red suit.

And just like that, Santa Claus is coming to town.

It All Began with a Christmas Wish

Like so many good Christmas stories, this one began with an unexpected twist.

Twenty-one years ago, Santa's aunt found herself in a holiday predicament. The Santa scheduled for an event couldn't make it, and someone would have to save the day.

Enter our unsuspecting hero.

What began as a simple favour soon became a cherished annual tradition. One event led to another; another family needed a Santa, and before long, the calls kept coming. Somewhere along the way, the man who had agreed to help his aunt found himself becoming a rather important part of Christmas for countless families.

Of course, every Santa needs a proper suit.

The early years featured a simple beard and felt hat, a far cry from the magnificent ensemble he wears today. His current suit is a masterpiece of rich, Coca-Cola-red velvet, plush white fur and carefully chosen details. Every ribbon, cuff and embellishment has been selected with care.

And make no mistake, Santa takes his wardrobe very seriously. A little mud on the white fur trim, courtesy of an enthusiastic young visitor, can mean hours of painstaking cleaning.

"I've spent four hours going through the fur with a fine-tooth comb," he recalls with a laugh.

Even the ribbon has a story. When a favourite design was discontinued, a few kind-hearted employees at Fabricland



went out of their way to help him track down enough to finish the suit. It was a small act of kindness, but one that left a lasting impression.

"Everywhere I turn, there are people who want to help, people who want to give," he reflects. "And it just reminds me that I want to give, too."

It seems that even Santa occasionally needs a little help from his elves.

A Most Important Job

Now, you might be wondering what happens when someone asks Santa if he's the real deal. As it turns out, he has a rather wonderful answer.

He calls himself a Spirit Santa.

When his daughter was young, he explained that although he'd never had the pleasure of meeting the real Santa Claus, he had been entrusted with a very important responsibility.

"I've never met the real Santa," he told her. "But if he ever wants to do one of my events, I'll get a phone call saying, 'Thank you very much, but we don't need you this time.' Until then, my job is to keep the Christmas spirit alive."

And what an important job it is.

Over the years, he's become part of a close-knit community of Santas, some dear friends and others who have since passed away, leaving behind their own Christmas legacies.

"It's a small community, and there's a bond between us," he explains. "You know they have the same heart you do. They're there for the same reason, to bring joy to people."

There's a quiet understanding among them. They know that being Santa comes with a special kind of responsibility, one that has very little to do with reindeer, rooftops or the logistics of delivering presents around the world.

For him, it's about preserving the wonder.

When children question whether he's the real Santa, he doesn't feel the need to convince them. "I'm not there to convince anybody," he says. "If they don't believe, that's okay. But for the children who do believe, I want to be there for them. I want to keep that magic alive."

And somewhere along the way, something rather extraordinary happens. The beard goes on, the suit is buttoned, and with an almost invisible flicker of Christmas magic, the familiar face disappears.

In his place stands Santa Claus.

He and his longtime performing partner, Mrs. Claus, have perfected the art of bringing Christmas to life. With years of experience between them, they seem to know instinctively what the other is thinking, anticipating the next greeting, the next photograph and the next excited little visitor.

But the spirit that brings Santa to life doesn't vanish when the beard comes off.

At Thanksgiving, he and his wife welcomed approximately 20 people around their table. Among them were

LEFT PHOTO BY SARAH AMELIA • RIGHT PHOTO BY VALERIA MITSUBATA

neighbours and families who might otherwise have spent the holiday with fewer people around them. What began as simple invitations became traditions of their own, with familiar faces returning year after year.

His wife, he explains, is the guiding light behind so much of what he does. Her kindness and generosity shape his decisions, and there's little he undertakes without seeking her thoughts. One of his most treasured traditions is the final event of his Christmas season, when his wife and daughter join him to help serve dinner in Stouffville. It's the one event they get to share, and one that holds a particularly special place in his heart.

Perhaps that's one of the loveliest things about this particular Santa. Christmas may be his busiest season, but the spirit of giving is a year-round affair.

Where Christmas Wishes Come True

For more than two decades, Santa has brought holiday cheer to communities across York Region, including appearances in the East Gwillimbury and Mount Albert Santa Claus parades, along with Stouffville favourites like the Holiday Market and the Museum's seasonal celebrations.

There are still a few Christmas wishes of his own waiting to come true. He hopes to one day ride in the Newmarket Santa Claus Parade to honour a dear friend who once rode in the sleigh. And closer to home, there's Stouffville, a parade he dreams of joining for the simple joy of celebrating with the community he's served for 21 years. He hopes his visits will take him beyond York Region, including to Shriners Children's in Montréal through his involvement as a Freemason.

> ***"Everywhere I turn, there are people who want to help, people who want to give. And it just reminds me that I want to give, too."***

But some of his most treasured visits take place far from the twinkling lights, festive music and excited crowds.

Each year, he reserves the final week before Christmas for visits to Southlake Regional Health Centre, bringing holiday cheer to children, patients facing serious illness and families spending the season somewhere they never expected.

In those moments, Santa understands that the greatest gift he can bring may be a warm smile, a gentle conversation or simply the comfort of being there.

"One of the greatest honours for me is being a child's first Santa," he shares.

During visits to the neonatal intensive care unit, he's helped create Christmas memories for some of the hospital's tiniest patients. Sometimes, that means leaving behind a Polaroid photograph for parents, a small keepsake of a Christmas their little one may be too young to remember, but one their family can treasure for years to come.

And the magic doesn't stop with children. His visits to seniors' residences have brought him face to face with people living with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, where a familiar red suit and a cheerful greeting can sometimes awaken a wonderful sense of excitement.

The years seem to melt away as hands reach out, faces brighten and familiar Christmas memories find their way to the surface.

"Whether they're six or 96, it's the same excitement," he says. "They want to sit with Santa, tell you their stories, take a picture. It's wonderful."

After all, who decided there was an age limit on believing in a little Christmas magic?

Two Little Words

Of all the Christmas memories Santa has tucked away over the years, one remains especially close to his heart.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when familiar traditions were being cancelled and the world felt unusually quiet, the community faced the possibility of a Christmas without its beloved parade.

But Santa had other plans. Rather than waiting to see what neighbouring communities might do, he was determined to find a way to bring a little Christmas cheer to the streets of East Gwillimbury. "We're going to find a way to make this happen," he remembers insisting.

With the help of community partners, including York Regional Police and the fire department, a float was prepared, arrangements were made, and Santa and Mrs. Claus set out to bring Christmas to local families.



It wasn't the Christmas anyone had imagined. There were no familiar crowds gathered shoulder to shoulder, no bustling celebrations and none of the usual certainty about what tomorrow might bring.

But there was Santa.

And as the float made its way through the community, something rather extraordinary happened. Instead of the familiar shouts of "Merry Christmas, Santa!" or excited calls about presents beneath the tree, he and Mrs. Claus heard something else.

Two little words, repeated again and again. Thank you.

"The thing we heard the most wasn't 'Merry Christmas, Santa.' It was 'Thank you, Santa,'" he recalls. "And that really stayed with us."

Long after the decorations were packed away and the float had made its final stop, those words remained. In a year when so much had been taken away, Santa's visit was a reminder that even in the most uncertain times, there was still room for joy.

And for the man beneath the beard, it was a Christmas wish fulfilled.

PHOTOS BY VALERIA MITSUBATA

A Heart Full of Christmas

As our conversation continued, I began to realize that the story of this Santa Claus was about far more than a magnificent suit or a calendar filled with holiday appearances.

It was about the kind of person who chooses to give.

Growing up, he didn't always have everything he needed. He remembers wearing his shoes until they were completely worn out, making them last as long as possible. It's a memory that has stayed with him, and one that helps explain why he places such value on the things he has today.

As he shared his experiences, I found myself thinking about how differently people can respond to the difficult parts of their lives.

Some experiences can leave us guarded or reluctant to embrace the very things we once missed. But here was someone who had chosen to create joy for others, to fill their holidays with the kind of warmth and wonder that every child deserves.

He sees goodness in the people around him; the other Santas who share his dedication, the community partners who help bring an event to life, the kind employees who searched for that perfect ribbon, and the families who welcome him into their homes and hearts.

Everywhere he looks, he finds another reason to give.

It's a spirit that feels particularly fitting for someone who has spent 21 years serving the town of Stouffville. While his everyday responsibilities may look rather different from his Christmas appearances, both reflect a genuine commitment to the community he calls home.

And although retirement may be just a few years away, don't expect this Santa to spend his golden years with his feet up beside the fireplace.

He's already dreaming of his next adventure.

His hope is to establish a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing Santa to community events, hospitals and families who could use a little extra Christmas cheer.

After more than two decades of making Christmas wishes come true, he hopes retirement will give him even more time to do what he loves.

Something tells me his calendar will remain rather full.

And to All a Good Night

When I asked how he decompresses after a long day of greeting children, listening to wish lists, and posing for countless photographs, he looked almost puzzled.

I had imagined a quiet evening, perhaps a well-deserved rest after hours of spreading Christmas cheer.

But as he considered the question, I realized I may have had it backwards. The very thing I thought might leave him exhausted seemed to be what filled him with energy.

And I think I understand that feeling a little better now.

I remember another evening at Stouffville's Holiday Market, surrounded by the familiar sights and sounds of the season. Among the twinkling lights and festive bustle, I spotted Santa.

He greeted me by name and wrapped me in a big hug.

My friends stared in disbelief. "How do you know Santa?"

And there I was, a grown woman in my thirties, having what can only be described as my very own Elf moment.

I know him! I was simply delighted that Santa Claus knew my name.

After spending time hearing his stories, I think I understand why that moment felt so special.

The magic is there in the velvet suit, the snowy beard, and the sparkle that catches the light on his cheek. But it reaches far beyond them.

It follows him into hospital rooms and seniors' residences. It travels along parade routes, finds its way into family photographs and settles around Thanksgiving tables where there's always room for one more.

And perhaps that's the most wonderful thing about being a Spirit Santa.

The spirit of giving was never meant to belong to just one man in a red suit. It's something we can all carry, something that grows a little brighter each time we pass it along.

You needn't have a sleigh, a team of reindeer or a workshop at the North Pole.

A generous heart will do just fine.

And somewhere in Stouffville, behind an ordinary office door, there's a man who has spent 21 years showing us how.



Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!

Where to find Santa this winter

Holiday Market

Fri, November 20 – Sat, November 21 • FREE

townofws.ca/holidaymarket

Santa Claus Parade

Sun, December 5, 6 PM • FREE

townofws.ca/santaclausparade

Santa Visits the Museum

Sat, December 12 • 12 – 4 PM • $15

Recommended for children ages 3-10. Required parent/ guardian free of charge.

townofws.ca/santavisits

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Give the gift of a well-equipped hospital this holiday season.



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Your gift brings care closer to home by funding life-saving equipment at Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital.

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Stouffville Holiday Market

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH • 5 - 9 PM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST • 11 AM - 7 PM
6240 Main St.

Celebrate the holidays with our largest winter event! The event will feature a local artisan vendor marketplace, magical lighting displays, food and beverage, Santa Claus, and more.

townofws.ca/holidaymarket



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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH • 6 – 9 PM
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH • 10 AM – 9 PM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST • 10 AM – 9 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND • 10 AM – 4 PM
19 on the Park Theatre

Shop unique, handcrafted work from up to 32 Ontario artisans while supporting Latcham Art Centre. At 19 on the Park Theatre, 19 Civic Avenue, Stouffville.

latchamartcentre.ca

Mistletoe Market For Kids

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH & SUNDAY 6TH
11 AM – 3 PM
Redefined Finds, 6258 Main St.

Redefined Finds presents the Mistletoe Market, a special holiday shopping experience where children can select affordable gifts for loved ones with help from Santa's elves, complete with gift wrapping and festive surprises.

redefinedfinds.ca

The Stouffville Christmas Market

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH • 9 AM - 2 PM
6240 Main St.

Join the festive atmosphere inside at 6240 Main St., where the holiday spirit is brought to life. Browse the aisles and discover talented artisans and food vendors showcasing their finest creations.

thestouffvillemarket.ca

Merry Little Makers Market

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH • 10 AM - 5 PM
Ballantrae Community Centre, 5592 Aurora Rd.

Handmade gifts, décor, jewellery, art and more. All event profits, will be donated toward the playground at Ballantrae Public School. Shop local. Give joy. Help build a playground.

instagram.com/merrylittlemakersmarket

Christmas Open House

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH • 12 PM - CLOSE
Muddy York Brewing Co., 50 Innovator Ave Unit 1

Muddy York Brewing Co. welcomes the community to its Christmas Open House with family-friendly activities, hot chocolate, brewhouse tours, complimentary tastings, and festive cheer.

muddyyorkbrewing.com

Black Friday Month at Corner Spa

NOVEMBER
Corner Spa and Wellness

November is Black Friday month at Corner Spa & Wellness! Keep your eyes open for holiday gift ideas and savings of up to 75% off in our gift shop. First-time clients can enjoy 15% off wellness services, including registered massage therapy, and 25% off aesthetic services. Treat yourself or someone you love this holiday season!

cornerspaandwellness.ca



Toys for Tickets

NOVEMBER 29TH - DECEMBER 13TH
Town Hall, 111 Sandiford Dr.

The Linda Mainprize Toys for Tickets program is back in Stouffville. From November 29th through December 13th, residents can donate new toys in lieu of parking ticket fines. Suggested items include unwrapped toys, non-perishable food, and gift cards for teens. Donations are accepted at 111 Sandiford Dr. until December 14th and will benefit the Stouffville Lions Club and Food Bank, spreading holiday cheer to local families in need.

townofws.ca/parking

Festive Karma Classes

THROUGHOUT DECEMBER
True Path Yoga & Pilates, 20 Freel Lane, Unit 11 & 12

Celebrate the spirit of the season with 11 complimentary yoga, Pilates and barre classes! Give back to our wonderful community while enjoying movement, mindfulness and festive cheer. Donations will be collected in support of the Lions Club Toy Drive and the WS Food Bank.

truepathyogastouffville.com

Fill a Purse

DEADLINE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST
Various drop-off locations

Support the Fill a Purse for a Sister Campaign by donating purses filled with essential personal care items for women in crisis. Suggested donations include shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothpaste and feminine hygiene products. Drop-off locations are available in Stouffville and across York Region.

fillapurseforasistercampaign.ca

Smiles and Full Plates

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST • DOORS 1 PM
Stouffville Legion, 150 Mostar Street

Smiles and Full Plates Battle of the Bands returns for its third annual event, featuring live music, prizes, and family-friendly fun in support of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

smilesandfullplates@gmail.com

Stouffville Christmas Dinner

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20TH • 1PM
6240 Main St.

Enjoy the magic of the holidays at the Stouffville Christmas Dinner, a cherished tradition that brings the community together for an evening of delicious food, warm conversation, and holiday cheer.

facebook.com/stouffvillechristmasdinner

Presents With A Purpose - Gift Wrap For Epilepsy - Mobile Service

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 23RD TO DECEMBER 18TH
Epilepsy York Region Mobile Service

Give your employees, sports team, or community group a helping hand this holiday season! Invite us to your office or meeting place, and we'll bring our gift-wrapping services to you. Mobile service includes a personalized flyer for you to share with your group to promote the event.

epilepsyyork.org/2026-holiday-gift-wrap

Presents With A Purpose Gift Wrap For Epilepsy

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
DECEMBER 7TH TO 23RD • 9 AM - 4 PM
Epilepsy York Region, 6356 Main St.

Epilepsy York Region offers holiday gift-wrapping services, with all proceeds supporting individuals living with epilepsy and their families.

epilepsyyork.org/2026-holiday-gift-wrap



Santa Claus Parade

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH • 6 PM
Main Street

Join us to celebrate the season as a cavalcade of lights, floats, bands and more will make its way down our Historic Downtown Main Street.

townofws.ca/parade

46th Annual Victorian Tea

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH • 11 AM & 1:30 PM
Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum

A delicious taste of Christmas past, featuring a traditional catered tea and a festive tour of the Museum's buildings.

townofws.ca/victea



Annual Open House

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH • 9 AM - 4 PM
Velvet Sunrise Coffee Roasters, 8-100 Ringwood Dr.

Velvet Sunrise Coffee Roasters celebrates 17 years with holiday treats, seasonal beverages, samples of its Nutcracker Coffee Blend, and specialty hot chocolate from Alight Chocolate. Guests are invited to enjoy refreshments and festive cheer throughout the event.

velvetsunrise.ca

A WonderPhil Christmas Magic Show

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19TH
DOORS 10:30 AM, SHOW 11 AM
19 on the Park Theatre

Celebrate the season with a magical holiday experience for all ages. WonderPhil brings his acclaimed blend of illusion, comedy, and Christmas sparkle to the stage, creating a festive atmosphere filled with astonishment and laughter.

townofws.ca/concertseries

Jingle and Jive

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19TH
DOORS 2 PM, DINNER 5 PM
Stouffville Legion, 150 Mostar Street

Enjoy an afternoon of festive fun at the Stouffville Legion's Jingle & Jive Christmas celebration on December 19. Savour a holiday dinner, dance to live music by The Chapman Brothers, and show off your favourite Christmas sweater or festive colours.

rochellestouffvillelegion@rogers.com

Santa Visits the Museum

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH • 12 - 4 PM
Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum

Join us for a festive day of family fun including visits with Santa, horse-drawn wagon rides, tours of the heritage buildings decorated for the holidays, holiday crafts, and more!

townofws.ca/santavisits



Breakfast with Santa

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6TH • 9 - 11 AM
Stouffville Legion, 150 Mostar Street

Start your morning with a classic breakfast while helping the Stouffville Food Bank. Donations of hot chocolate, honey, and shampoo are appreciated.

stouffvillelegion.ca

Mayor & Council's New Year's Eve Levee & Skate

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31ST
4 PM SKATING TRAIL • 7 PM FIREWORKS
Skating Trail & Memorial Park

Enjoy a family-friendly skate at the Multi-Purpose Trail from 4-6 PM followed by food trucks, enjoy fiery entertainment, and free hot beverages (while supplies last) in Memorial Park from 6-7 PM. Fireworks start at 7 PM.

townofws.ca/nye



Men of Note 2026 Christmas Concert

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19TH • 2 PM & 7:30 PM
Christ Church Stouffville

Make holiday memories through music at the Men of Note 2026 Christmas Concert. Enjoy an evening of rich harmonies, seasonal favourites, and festive traditions that capture the spirit of the season.

menofnote.com

Ugly Sweater Christmas Potluck

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19TH • 2 - 6 PM
Stouffville Legion, 150 Mostar St.

Come out for an evening of live band music, a festive gift exchange, and a meat roll draw. Enjoy great company, holiday cheer, and plenty of fun along the way!

stouffvillelegion.ca

FESTIVE NIGHTS OUT

Ladies' Night

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH • 5 - 9 PM
Main Street

Ladies' Night in the Village Stouffville invites friends to shop, dine, enjoy entertainment, prizes, and exclusive deals from 5 to 9 PM. Tickets are $15, with proceeds supporting the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

discoverstouffville.ca/events

A Broadsway Christmas

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3RD
DOORS 7 PM, CONCERT 7:30 PM
19 on the Park Theatre

Get into the seasonal spirit with the glow of a late-night jazz lounge, complete with enchanting music, delightful stories and the unmistakable 'Broadsway' touch.

townofws.ca/concertseries

Holiday Ball: Dedication Night

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH • 1 - 4 PM
19 on the Park Theatre

Experience an unforgettable night of ballroom dancing at the historic 19 on the Park, hosted by Arthur Murray Stouffville. Enjoy music, dance performances, and celebrate the joy of dance in a warm, festive atmosphere!

arthurmurraystouffville.com

Momming the Musical

JANUARY 9TH, 15TH, 16TH, & 30TH
Various Venues

Momming is an original community musical by local writer and composer Carmelina Karas, celebrating the realities of motherhood through music, storytelling, and community.

instagram.com/mommingthemusical

LIBRARY EVENTS

wsplibrary.ca

Special Edition Christmas Craft

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM

Celebrate the season with a Christmas craft for little ones. Ages 0-36 months. $5. Registration required.



Coping with the Holidays

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7TH • 6 - 7:30 PM

Join Evergreen Hospice to learn strategies for navigating the holiday season while grieving and remembering a loved one. Ages 18+. Free. Registration required.

Holiday Storytime

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10TH • 6:30 - 7 PM

Enjoy a seasonal storytime for all ages. Free, drop-in.

Hanukkah Storytime

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH • 10:15 - 10:45 AM

Celebrate the Hanukkah season with stories and a craft. All ages. Free, drop-in.

Kwanzaa Story and Craft

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29TH • 10:30 - 11:30 AM

Learn about Kwanzaa and make a craft celebrating African heritage and culture. All ages. Free, drop-in.

Sustainable Workshop: Seasonal Cedar

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH • 10 AM & 1 PM
Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum

Join the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for a cozy day of crafting and heritage.

townofws.ca/seasonalcedar

GET CRAFTY THIS HOLIDAY
Find lots of workshops on this spread



Felted Ornament Workshop

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH • 1 - 3 PM
Latcham Art Centre

Create felted ornaments with professional artist Lauren Smart. All materials provided.
Ages 18+. $43 + HST. Registration required.

latchamartcentre.ca



Seasonal Candle Making Workshops

WEEKLY • 6:30 - 8:30 PM
francis + meyer, 6290 Main St.

Francis + Meyer invites guests to create a custom-scented candle using a premium plant-based wax blend. The hands-on workshop includes step-by-step instruction, all materials, after-hours shopping, exclusive discounts, refreshments, and a festive atmosphere.

francisandmeyercandleco.com/events

Workshops by Perennial Petals

THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER
Perennial Petals, 3332 Stouffville Rd.

Get into the holiday spirit with a festive workshop series designed to inspire creativity and connection. Using fresh greenery, seasonal accents, and natural materials, participants will create beautiful handmade décor in a relaxed, small-group setting. All materials are included, and no experience is required.

perennialpetals.com/workshops





Wine & Paint Night

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10TH • 6 - 8 PM
Latcham Art Centre

Enjoy a guided evening of painting in the art studio. Supplies provided; wine available for purchase.
Ages 19+. Government-issued ID required.
$40.80 + HST. Registration required.

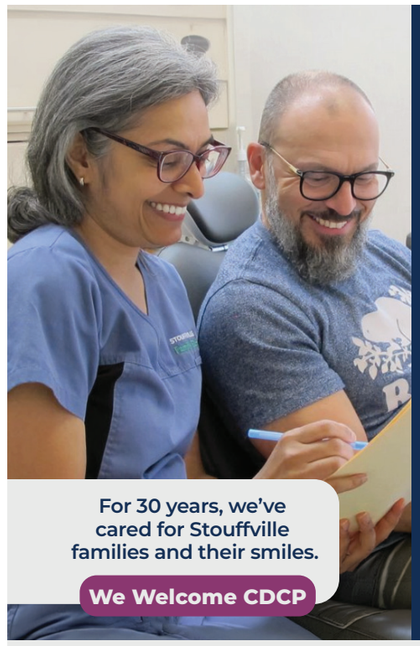
latchamartcentre.ca

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discoverstouffville.ca/events

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'Mikey Robs' Legacy is in Loving Hands

Sold-out golf tourney, university award gives 'purpose' to family of popular Stouffville native





by Jim Mason
jimmason905@gmail.com

Mike Robinson's presence was definitely felt at the inaugural golf tournament played in his memory.

One hundred and forty-four people teed it up at scenic Wooden Sticks Golf Course in Uxbridge on Sept. 28 in honour of the Stouffville native who died tragically at age 32 while on a golf vacation in Wisconsin in 2025. He left his wife, Rachel, and their infant daughter.

The tourney sold out within days of being announced.

They poured in from all corners of North America:

Teammates from his hockey days playing junior in Stouffville, Wellington and St. Catharines, at Ontario Tech University in Oshawa and professionally in Florida and Europe.

Co-workers from the New Jersey golf simulator firm, now The Indoor Golf Shop, he worked for at the time of his death.

Kids he grew up with in Stouffville and their parents.

Extended hugs and kind words naturally abounded for Mike's parents, Josie and Rob.

Jerseys from stops on Mike's hockey journey lined the walls of the banquet hall.

It was all about 'Mikey Robs' as they affectionately called him. The nickname plastered across tournament signage and socials was given to him by Niagara IceDogs teammate Ryan Strome, who is now a Calgary Flame.

Ontario Tech was all over the golf tournament, justifiably. Funds raised at the event went to the Mike Robinson Memorial Award, which recognizes student-athletes who "exemplify the qualities that defined Mike: leadership, teamwork, perseverance, community spirit, and mentorship." In 2017–18, Mike was a member of the school's inaugural Ridgeback Leadership Council, serving as Vice-President of Athlete Engagement.

This year's recipients were Cassie Delves of Clarington, now in her fifth year with the women's hockey program, and Kyle Leonard of Ottawa, who is in his third season with the men's team.

The Stouffville Spirit Jr. A team was well represented by more than a dozen alumni. Four of Mike's teammates on the 2012 Spirit squad, the only team in the franchise's 31-year history to win the league championship, were there: Paul Geiger, Alex Botten, Jon Hall, and Robert Powers.

Alain Vellieux, who billeted with the Robinson family when he played for the Spirit 25 years ago, drove in from the Ottawa Valley.

Stickers commemorating Mike's life, originated by the Spirit as helmet decals a year ago, were handed out to participants at the tournament.

The past year has been a struggle for the Robinsons, Mike's sister, Ryley, admitted in a post-tournament interview.

"Every day is different. But I will say when we got together as a family and then as a larger committee where we had Mike's closest friends working with us meeting each Wednesday (to plan the tournament) for me, it was giving me some purpose," she said. "It doesn't change the past. It doesn't make me miss him any less, but I felt like, wow, I can do something with my brother (Jacob), my husband (Chris Jarrett), and the family together."

"It really did help some of those quieter weeks. And then to look around (at the tournament)... We're just really excited for that legacy that gets to be built for him."

"And I kept reminding myself, I lost my brother tragically and horribly. It should never have happened, right? But I get to put on an event with my (family) that gets to honour him and keep his name going."

"The year was long, and each day was different and tough, but I personally felt like this was some purpose for me, which I think has helped us get through the healing."

A DoorDash driver was charged with first-degree homicide in the drive-by shooting of Mike Robinson in Wisconsin. His next court appearance is scheduled for January.



Mike Robinson's family and tournament committee members pose at the Mikey Robs Memorial Golf Tournament in September.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIM MASON



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

AN UPDATE BY GLENN JACKSON

Construction Gets Underway

After years of planning, construction on Stouffville's Downtown Revitalization began November 2nd, marking a major milestone in the transformation of Main Street.

With work underway, residents and businesses are invited to learn more about what's ahead at a Public Open House on Thursday, November 26th, from 6 to 8 p.m. at 19 on the Park Theatre.

The Downtown Revitalization Project has been awarded to Rabcon Contractors Limited, with the project anticipated to be completed by December 2028.

The first stage began November 2nd and is expected to be completed by December 23rd, focusing on Main Street between Park Drive and approximately 100 metres east of Park Drive. Crews will complete a storm sewer extension and roadway restoration before Stage 2 (west of Park Drive, to Market Street/Mill Street) begins in the new year.

As work progresses, residents, businesses and visitors can expect traffic delays, traffic detours and temporary lane closures, along with increased noise, dust and vibration. Traffic control measures will be in place, and no on-street parking will be available within the active construction zone.

Pedestrian access will be maintained, although routes may be adjusted around work areas. Access to homes and businesses will also be maintained whenever possible. Advance notice will be provided for planned disruptions to driveways or municipal services, as well as any required overnight work or road closures.

The Town has retained OZA Inspections Ltd. to conduct pre-construction condition surveys of nearby properties, with impacted residents and businesses notified directly.

The November 26th Public Open House will give the community an opportunity to learn more about the revitalization, upcoming stages and what to expect as work continues through downtown Stouffville.

Get project updates

Follow this project and sign up to receive the eNewsletter at **townofws.ca/downtown**

York Region Brings Fibre Internet to Rural Stouffville

by Adriana Barbary

Residents who have struggled with slow or unreliable internet now have a better option. YorkNet, a York Region-owned corporation, has partnered with Galaxy Fibre to bring high-speed, fibre optic internet to underserved rural homes in Stouffville through the Universal Broadband Fund.

Activations are underway for eligible homes in the Warden Avenue and Bloomington Road service area. Once construction is complete, more than 475 homes across town will be eligible. Homes on northern stretches of Kennedy Road, McCowan Road, Highway 48, Ninth Line, and Vivian Road are expected to begin activations by the end of the year, with a few homes on McCowan Road, south of Stouffville Road, to follow in spring 2027.

The program focuses on areas with speeds below 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload, so not every address will qualify. Residents can check eligibility using the interactive map at **yorknet.ca**. Eligible homeowners can also request a free fibre connection from the property line to their home, with no obligation to sign up for service.

YorkNet owns the network but does not sell internet packages. For plans, speeds, and pricing, visit **galaxyfibre.ca**

Women Join Forces to Help Health Care Thrive

by Glenn Jackson

Thrive WITH MSH, held September 24th in Richmond Hill, brought together women leaders, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and health-care experts for conversations about women's health and well-being.

The event was part of WITH MSH, or Women Inspired To Help MSH, an initiative launched by the MSH Foundation in 2025 to bring women together through collective philanthropy.

Its 46 founding members contributed $460,000 in the program's first year, supporting priorities at Markham Stouffville Hospital in breast health, gynecology and youth mental health.

The Foundation hopes to grow the initiative to 100 members and $1 million in cumulative giving.

Members will help decide where future funding goes at The Final Pitch on March 3rd, 2027, voting on a priority need and helping strengthen care available to Stouffville residents.

For more information, visit **mshf.on.ca/with**

COUNCIL CORNERS COLUMN

Council Approves Zoning for Proposed Tenth Line Mosque

Ringwood development wastes little time reaching its next approval milestone



by Glenn Jackson
glenn.jackson@townofws.ca



Stouffville Council approved a Zoning By-law Amendment for 12662 Tenth Line, on the west side of Tenth Line north of Forsyth Farm Dr., to permit a proposed mosque.

Zoning Amendment on Tenth Line

At the October 14th Special Council Meeting, Council approved a Zoning By-law Amendment for 12662 Tenth Line, on the west side of Tenth Line north of Forsyth Farm Dr., to permit a proposed place of worship.

The application, submitted on behalf of Darul Khair Centre Stouffville, proposes an approximately 2,807-square-metre facility with worship spaces, a gymnasium, classrooms, offices and assembly areas. The conceptual plan includes 168 parking spaces.

The zoning amendment allows the proposed use but does not represent final development approval. The applicant must still complete additional planning approvals. Council also directed that the future Site Plan Control application return to Council, where details including traffic, servicing, landscaping, lighting, noise, and site access will be considered.

Townhouses in Ringwood

The proposed Ringwood townhouse development featured in last month's Council Corners is another step closer to moving forward.

In August, Council approved the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments for the lands near Main St. and Highway 48. At the time, we noted that additional approvals, including a Draft Plan of Subdivision, would still be required.

On October 14th, Council approved the Draft Plan of Subdivision, subject to conditions. The plan creates nine blocks, including lands proposed for 165 townhouses, and a commercial block planned for a hotel, restaurant, and retail building.

The development also includes open space for a trail connection and 2.92 hectares of Natural Heritage System lands to be conveyed to the Town. The historic Major John Button House is proposed to be relocated and incorporated into the future hotel development.

There are still more steps ahead. Detailed engineering, servicing, and other technical requirements must be addressed, and future condominium and Site Plan Control applications will also be required.

Recreation Grant Applications

Council directed staff to pursue provincial funding for improvements at Bethesda Sports Fields and the transformation of Simeon Park through Ontario's Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund. The program can fund up to 50 percent of eligible project costs.

The proposed $2 million Bethesda project includes converting the senior soccer field to artificial turf, rehabilitating the cricket pitch, paving the parking lot, and adding LED sports lighting, irrigation, safety netting, shelters and bleachers. If successful, the Town could receive approximately $1 million in provincial funding.

For the 95-acre Simeon Park property, featured in last month's On the Road, the Town will seek funding to begin transforming it into a public community park. Initial plans include environmental and condition assessments, replacing the existing outdoor pool with a larger, fully accessible pool, replacing the play structure, and considering upgrades to the existing sports fields.

The funding application represents an early step as the Town continues assessing the property and planning for its future use.

COUNCIL & PUBLIC PLANNING MEETINGS

Upcoming Council Meetings:
Wednesday, November 18 – 7 PM
Wednesday, December 2 – 1 PM
Wednesday, December 16 – 1 PM

Upcoming Public Meetings:
Wednesday, December 2 – 7 PM

Agendas for Council and Public Meetings will be available on **townofws.ca/council** at 12 PM the Thursday prior to the meeting.

Anyone wishing to provide comments may attend the meeting in-person at the Municipal Offices.
Contact clerks@townofws.ca for more information.

Listen live: **townofws.ca/cmlivestream**
Live posts on X: **@ws_townhall**
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talk of the town

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RECREATION

PA Day & Winter Break Camps
Nov. 20 and Winter Break
Keep busy with arts, sports, science experiments and more at PA Day and Winter Break camps.
townofws.ca/active

Youth Karaoke Night
Dec. 16 | 6 - 8 PM | FREE
Youth in Grades 7–12 can grab the mic and sing their heart out with this free drop-in event at 19 on the Park.
townofws.ca/yawg

Fitness & Aquatics Annual Promotion
Dec 15, 2026 - Jan 17, 2027
Take advantage of an exclusive offer for new members, sign up for 3 months and get the 4th month free!

Email **leisure.services@townofws.ca** or call 905-642-7529.

19 ON THE PARK THEATRE

A WonderPhil Christmas Magic Show
Nov. 29 | 11 AM | $
Celebrate the season with a family-friendly blend of illusions, comedy and Christmas magic.
townofws.ca/concertseries

A Broadsway Christmas
Dec. 3 | 7:30 PM | $
Celebrate the season with JUNO-nominated vocalist Heather Bambrick, Dora Award-nominated pianist Diane Leah and their six-piece band.
townofws.ca/concertseries

MUSEUM

Sustainable Workshop: Seasonal Cedar
Dec. 5 | 10 AM or 1 PM | $25 + HST
Celebrate the season with a hands-on holiday workshop featuring crafting and heritage, presented with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.
townofws.ca/museumevents

Santa Visits the Museum
Dec. 12 | 12 – 4 PM | $15 + HST
Enjoy visits with Santa, horse-drawn wagon rides, holiday crafts and more. Recommended for ages 4–10, with required parent or guardian admission free.
townofws.ca/santavisits

Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville: 2027 Site Applications
Applications open until Jan. 16, 2027
Want to be part of Doors Open 2027? Applications are open for sites to participate in the June 5 event and showcase the places that help tell Stouffville's story.
townofws.ca/doorsopen

Beyond Blue & White: Wedgwood Designed for Canada
Open until Dec. 19 | FREE
Discover more than 40 Canadian-themed Wedgwood artifacts on loan from King Heritage & Cultural Centre and explore the iconic British ceramic maker's expansion into Canada.
townofws.ca/exhibits

Worthy: The History of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps
Open until Dec. 19 | FREE
Presented by the Canadian Tank Museum, this exhibit explores the history of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps and its founder, Major-General Frederic Franklin Worthington.
townofws.ca/exhibits

LATCHAM ART CENTRE

Images, 2026! Opening Reception
Dec. 16 | 5 – 8 PM | FREE
Celebrate artwork by the graduating classes of Stouffville District Secondary School and St. Katharine Drexel Catholic High School. Everyone is welcome.
latchamartcentre.ca

Winter Break Art Camp
Dec. 21, 22, 23, 28, 29 & 30 | 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM | $
Kids ages 5–11 can spend the day exploring different art materials, styles and techniques in Latcham Art Centre's studio. Registration required.
latchamartcentre.ca

WINTER WEATHER REMINDERS

Winter weather is on the way. Please drive with care. No on-street parking 2 AM – 6 AM (Dec. 1 – Mar. 31) or during winter maintenance; permits are void during operations.
townofws.ca/snow

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