



Observer, Braydon Keddie

**QUICKDRAW FUNDRAISER:** Jessie Sulidis (left) of eTalk's The Rose Report models for students in the fine arts program at Centennial College's East York campus. They were taking part in a fundraising event at Billiards Academy on Danforth Avenue. **See story on page 2.**

## Candidates assemble as election looms

By OBSERVER STAFF

Even before Toronto-Danforth MP and NDP Leader Jack Layton rejected the federal budget and made this weekend's election call a foregone conclusion, local candidates were lining up to contest the three ridings that intersect in East York.

And voters in Toronto-Danforth, Beaches-East York and Don Valley West can be forgiven for their sense of déjà vu... because the marquee matchups in 2011 look a lot like the marquee matchups in 2008.

The most interesting race may be in Don Valley West — traditionally the most politically conservative of the three ridings, and one that political observers consider a particular Tory target this time.

There, Liberal Rob Oliphant and Conservative John Carmichael are getting ready for a rematch of their rivalry three years ago. Oliphant, a former accountant and United Church minister, battled with Carmichael, a car dealer and veteran Conservative candidate, to the closest call in East York on that October election night: Oliphant won by fewer than 3,000 votes out of more than 50,000 cast.

A story earlier this year in the respected Hill Times newspaper, specializing in federal politics, listed Don Valley West as one of 45 ridings across the country that the Conservatives' national apparatus will be working especially hard to flip to its side. And almost simultaneously, a leak from the office of Jason Kenney, the Conservative immigration minister, revealed



CARMICHAEL



OLIPHANT

a plan to target so-called "ethnic" ridings with special campaign advertising. Don Valley West wasn't among the handful of ridings specifically listed in the plan, but the concentration of recent immigrants in the southern end of the riding — especially around the apartment blocks of Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park — may well fit the strategy.

"Stephen Harper's Conservative government understands the global recovery is still fragile," Carmichael said in a statement on his website. "That's why we are focused on the economy and helping families."

Oliphant countered: "Our job is to bring honesty, integrity, and respect back to Ottawa." In a Wednesday interview, he also cited recent government scandals and a lack of social progress as reasons to turn out the Tories in Ottawa.

The New Democrats will be picking their candidate for Don Valley West at a meeting this coming Tuesday evening.

The NDP traditionally runs behind in Don Valley West, like the Conservatives do in Beaches-East York and Toronto-Danforth. In those two ridings, the main contests are expected to be between New Democrats and Liberals who, again, are mostly familiar to East Yorkers.

**See PARTIES, page 7**

## No all-day kindergarten yet

By MATILDA MIRANDA

A local trustee says it's no surprise that not one of the 200 additional schools in Ontario to offer full-day kindergarten this September is in East York.

"It isn't because nobody loves East York," says Sheila Cary-Meagher, trustee for the Toronto District School Board's Ward 16. "It's because our schools are full. We don't have the room."

The program began last September with 600 schools. The Ministry of Education has said that every kindergarten student in Ontario will be in a full-day classroom by 2015.

Cary-Meagher said some parents are unhappy that East

**Plans progress for a kindergarten-only school in E.Y.**  
**Story on page 2.**

York schools are not included in this year's phase-in.

"The community, particularly Crescent Town, is not happy," she said. "They have wanted this for quite some time."

Almost all the schools in East York are at capacity. Cary-Meagher said the board is going to have to put in portables or apply for additional funding for additions to two existing public schools, Secord and

George Webster.

"We're going to have to fill up their playgrounds with portables or we're going to have an addition," she said. "We have some fancy footwork to do. We can't just throw them in portables."

Cary-Meagher said pitching the idea of building new schools in Ward 16 is out of the question.

"The province will not give us the money to do it. We can't do anything of that nature without their permission," she said. "They look at the whole city and say, 'You've got schools in the city. Close them.' It doesn't work that way."

## March safety blitz looks to prevent hits

By GEOFFREY MOSHER

Distracted drivers have been a big focus for the province lately, but careless pedestrians got some attention from police in an East York-based campaign that wrapped up on Sunday.

The March Safe Campaign to address pedestrian hazards ran out of 54 Division between March 14 and 20 and focused on pedestrian violations, such as ignoring red lights and crossing without a crosswalk. Drivers also faced tickets for putting pedestrians in danger.

Toronto police Sgt. Jack West said the campaign resulted in 631 citations.

West said that, locally, there have been three pedestrians killed so far this year. This follows 2010, a year that saw an early spike in pedestrian deaths

and that ended with a total 20 pedestrian fatalities.

"Eleven of those 20 were caused by people crossing mid-block," West said. "This should be a reminder to pedestrians not to cross the street mid-block. Keep your head up and scan. Expect the unexpected."

West said Toronto police were paying special attention to Danforth Avenue because it is such a populated area.

West described one incident near the intersection of Danforth and Logan avenues, where a woman wearing dark clothing was struck as she crossed from the south side to the north mid-block — as she did every morning. West said she didn't hear the Harley-Davidson motorcycle coming up behind

**See MORE, page 3**



Observer, Melanie Schawill

**OBEY THE HAND:** Pedestrians should respect crossing signals, police warn — unlike this walker.



Observer, Melanie Schawill

**EMERGENCY GRADING:** College security staff and representatives from city emergency services prepare for a debrief after the first-ever lockdown drill at Centennial College's East York campus, held at the Carlaw Avenue building on March 16. Police and other official observers pronounced the exercise a success.

## Plans progress for first kindergarten-only school

By **MATILDA MIRANDA**

While full-day kindergarten isn't coming to East York this fall, it's arriving with a flourish in September of 2012.

That's when 700 local kindergarten students will start their academic careers in a school built exclusively for them. It's believed to be the first facility of its kind in Canada.

The \$16-million building, which is being funded by the Ministry of Education, will be located beside Thorncliffe Park Public School and ease some of the overcrowding there. Gerri Gershon, Toronto District School Board trustee for Ward 13, said she wants the school to be completed by next September so it can accommodate junior and senior kindergarten students for full-day kindergarten.

"It's going to be very exciting," Gershon said. "It will provide a much-needed service to the community. The parents will really appreciate having the full-day opportunity for their children in a brand new state-of-the-art school."



GERSHON

In addition to full-day kindergarten, the school will also have a parent-ing centre and a childcare facility. The childcare facility will be funded by the city, said Sheila Penny, director of the strategic building and renewal for the TDSB.

Thorncliffe Park public school currently needs 20 portables to accommodate all of its students.

That's because it's located in a high-density area, Gershon said, and classroom sizes are capped at 20 for students from junior kindergarten to Grade 3.

Once the new school has been built, all the portables will be taken down, Penny said.

"(The parents) are really happy that their children won't have to be in portables anymore," she said.

Gershon said this is a unique school for young children. She doesn't know whether the story will be repeated at other schools across the province.

"It's meeting the needs in this particular area, for this particular situation. I don't know if this will be a trend."

Construction of the building is slated to start this summer and finish by September 2012.

## Arts fundraiser draws a crowd

By **BRAYDON KEDDIE**

Ready...set...draw!

Billiards Academy hosted a successful fundraiser for Centennial College's fine arts program on March 3. The event raised more than \$600 for the program's upcoming art exhibitions and brought many people out just to see how fast the students could work under the clock.

Artists were put in groups, with only five minutes to sketch live models and another minute to auction off their drawings to the highest bidder. David McClyment, co-ordinator of the fine arts program, said that finances are secondary to his main goal of bringing the students together.

"We're calling it a fundraiser and we do need the bucks," he said. "But for me the larger

issue is the bonding within the program itself."

Amid the socializing, raffles and games of pool, friends and supporters cheered on the artists as they competed intensely for the grand prize of \$150.

For fine arts students, the event was an opportunity to put their artwork up on the free market. But first-year student Angela Matamoros didn't just sign up to raise money for the program, but also to show appreciation for McClyment.

"It's a fundraiser, so we don't have to do it," Matamoros said. "But I wanted to do (this) for sure, because David means a lot to all of us. And this is for us too."

The fundraiser even grabbed the attention of Jessie Sulidis, host of eTalk's The Rose Report. Posing for the artists as a guest

celebrity model, she thought the event was valuable for their development.

"(Quickdraw) is great for the fine arts program," Sulidis said. "They get to raise money, it's beneficial for their career and it's also a lot of fun. I looked at one of the drawings and said, 'Oh, I like my waist-line in that,'" she said.

According to McClyment, the artists' skills improved as the event progressed. At the end of the fundraiser, Team Lollipop Guild prevailed with a drawing sold for \$120.

"By the end of the night, people were doing these amazing drawings in five minutes," McClyment said. "(The teams) got better at what they were doing, so by the end what they were accomplishing in five minutes was pretty significant."

## Police briefs

### Pair sought in taxi robbery

Two men are wanted in connection with the armed robbery of a taxi driver at Woodycrest Avenue on March 16. Police said the suspects flagged down a taxi at Pape Avenue and Queen Street East at approximately 3 a.m. The Crown Taxi employee, 45, drove the men to Woodycrest Avenue, where they ordered him to stop. Police report that one of the suspects grabbed the driver from behind, while the other man pulled out a handgun and held it toward the driver's head. The accused demanded that the driver give them cash, his GPS unit and his cellphone, police said. The victim handed over the items and the suspects fled the scene in an unknown direction. The driver was not injured, police report. The first suspect is described as 19-22 years of age and standing approximately five-foot-six to five-foot-eight tall. The second suspect is black. No further description is available.

### Police seek female suspect

Police are looking for a woman in connection with an assault and robbery in the Gower Street and Dawes Road area on March 17. A 57-year-old man was in an apartment with the accused just after midnight, police report. The suspect demanded that the man give her money and he refused. The accused then punched the man in the left eye and removed a quantity of cash from his pants pocket, police said. Police report the suspect fled the scene in an unknown direction. The victim sustained minor injuries. The woman is described as being of thin build and approximately five-foot-seven tall.

### Man wanted in bank holdup

A man is wanted in connection with a robbery at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce at 90 Danforth Ave. on March 17. The suspect entered the bank at 11:25 a.m. and approached the counter, police said. Police report the accused handed the teller a note demanding cash and indicated he had a concealed weapon. The teller complied and the man fled the scene eastbound along Danforth Avenue, police said. The teller was unharmed. The suspect is described as white, aged between 20 and 30 years old. He is of thin build and approximately six-foot-one tall, police report.

### Investigation ends in charges

Police arrested a man on March 12 in connection with an extortion investigation. Police allege that on Feb. 1, a woman hired the owner and operator of a general contracting company to complete renovations at her home. Police allege that what followed was substandard work, harassment, and the obtaining of money by unfair means. Police have charged 41-year-old Barrington Anthony Sayers, also known as Anthony Sayers, with two counts of criminal harassment, attempted fraud and extortion. Sayers is due to appear in court at College Park on Monday.

### Trio sought in home invasion

Police are looking for a trio of men in connection with an assault and attempted mugging on Sunday at Coxwell and Danforth avenues. A man and woman were entering their property when three men wearing disguises forced their way into the home, police report. The accused forced the victims to sit on the couch and one suspect produced a gun, police said. He demanded they give him cash and drugs, but the victims refused to do so. Police report one suspect then hit the man in head before all of the accused fled the scene in an unknown direction. The man was not seriously injured, police said. The suspects are described as black, aged between 18 and 23 years old. They are five-foot-nine to five-foot-11 tall and are estimated to weigh between 165 and 174 pounds.

—Sian Davies

## What's On

**GREEN FREAN:** The winners of the city's 2011 Green Toronto Awards will be revealed on April 15. Among the finalists is Kraft Canada's Peek Frean Bakery at 5 Bermondsey Rd. It is up for the water efficiency award, which recognizes efforts in promoting water preservation. The Green Toronto Awards recognize individuals, companies and organizations that encourage environmental progress. This year's winners will receive \$5,000 to either expand their environmental work or donate to an environmental charity. The ceremony will take place at the Green Living Show, Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place. Entry to the 7 p.m. event is free to the public.

**APRIL APPLICATIONS:** The Danforth East Community Association is looking for artistic submissions for the Danforth East Arts Fair. For the past two years, this outdoor event has featured jewelry, sculpture, home decor, arts and crafts by regional artisans. This year's fair will take place Sept. 17-18 on Danforth Avenue between Coxwell and Woodbine avenues. Artists are asked to send in their work for review by April 30. Applications can be downloaded online at [www.deca-arts.ca](http://www.deca-arts.ca).

—Farhana Uddin



Photo courtesy of therecordguys.com/Henry Stancu

**SCRATCHING A RECORD ITCH:** Music lovers indulge their passion for vinyl at The Toronto Downtown Record Show, held at the Estonian Banquet Hall in East York. The bi-annual event attracts over 700 people and features a vast assortment of music both classic and obscure.

## Opening the vinyl vault

By **SIAN DAVIES**

Music lovers across the city are set to flock to East York this Sunday for the 10th anniversary of the Toronto Downtown Record Show.

From young people new to the joys of vinyl to the seasoned collector, the show's diverse array of music, unique concert photos, posters and other memorabilia has made it a haven for all ages and musical tastes.

Show organizers Alan Keele and Akim Boldireff, a.k.a. The Record Guys, handpick a selection of more than 50 music-

related dealers who offer both obscure and popular favourites from Canada and around the world.

"We really make an effort to try and make sure it's accessible for everybody, without sacrificing interests for the collector," Keele said.

Keele grew up in his father's music store and has been a keen record collector since the age of 16. Both he and Boldireff have over 20 years' experience buying and selling music. He says the pair created the show to service a burgeoning market of vinyl en-

thusiasts in Toronto.

"We felt that there was a demographic of people that were really being underrepresented," he said. "There were a lot of people starting to gain interest in vinyl at that time, and it's certainly grown since then."

Today, the bi-annual show attracts over 700 people and features a vast assortment of music ranging from rock to reggae.

Visitors are encouraged to dust off their own record collections and bring items along for a free custom appraisal by Keele. If you have a real gem and are willing to sell it, he may be willing to buy it.

But for Keele, the most enjoyable part of the event is watching the city's community of music lovers get together to indulge their passion. This is especially true of the next generation, he says.

"It's good to see more young people," he said. "They have lots of questions and they're bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. I really love seeing that."

The Toronto Downtown Record Show takes place between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on March 27 at the Estonian Banquet Hall, 958 Broadview Ave. Admission is \$5.

# East Yorkers reach out to assist Japan

By **NICOLE PULSINELLI**

East Yorkers looking to help with earthquake relief in Japan can now do so at a local space.

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, located at 6 Garamond Court, off Wynford Drive between Don Mills Road and the Don Valley Parkway, has set up different ways one can contribute to their official charity, the Japan Earthquake Relief Fund.

The executive director of the JCCC, James Heron, says the centre is working with the Japanese embassy in Canada and the Canadian embassy in Japan — as well as agencies like the Red Cross.

"Many organizations have been donating and a lot of other community fundraisers are directing their money to our



KAWABUCHI

fund," he said. "We want people to know we're stewarding their money in the most responsible way possible."

Heron isn't Japanese. But he lived in Japan for 11 years and said he has a soft spot for Japanese people and culture.

"I hope the world can learn something about how the Japanese help each other. They're a good role model for the world," he said. "You read so many articles where people are amazed at the Japanese reaction to this. There's no silver lining, but it is an opportunity for the world to see the best of the Japanese people and what they're made out of."

A local Japanese woman and restaurant owner, Emi Kawabuchi, said the news of the earthquake was just unreal.

Kawabuchi said she was inspired by a fundraising concert held at the JCCC on March 12, the day after the earthquake.

Japanese jazz-pop musician Akiko Yano was performing.

"I didn't feel like going," she said. "Then I found out she (Yano) was singing to help people feel better about what happened. It made me ask myself, 'What I could do to help people too?'"

Kawabuchi, with the help of her restaurant staff, sold almost 100 California sushi rolls and bottles of water at the concert. She raised \$1,100 for the relief fund.

Heron said fundraising will continue for at least a year.

"The rebuilding (of Japan) itself will go on for five years, at least. Certainly within the Japanese community there will always be an awareness of that," he said.

Heron said the response from the community has been amazing. Japanese and non-Japanese Torontonians have come into the centre looking for ways to contribute. Heron said people walk into the centre and donate money, or collections of money from peers and volunteers.

One of the JCCC's next big moves is the Sakura Ball — an exclusive event including dinner and an award given to a special guest honouree. This year the Sakura award will be presented to David Suzuki.

Now in its third year, the Sakura Ball helps to raise money to repay some of the centre's debts after it was rebuilt. But this year, the money is going to a higher cause.

"Due to the extreme nature of the crisis in Japan, we decided this year to redirect \$100,000 from the ball to the earthquake relief," Heron said.

For more information on how to donate to the Japan Earthquake Relief Fund, visit the JCCC website at <http://www.jccc.on.ca>

## More diligence necessary for pedestrians, police say

Cont'd. from page 1

her. She was hit by the motorcycle and thrown to the street. She suffered an injured leg and some cuts.

West said the biker told police he had no chance to stop until it was too late.

West has some other advice for pedestrians: make sure to have eye contact with drivers and be certain they have come to a full stop before crossing the road, even if you are facing a

green light. Do not assume vehicles will stop.

Also, wait at least one second after the light turns green to make sure all the cars have stopped.

Besides making eye contact with drivers, be sure to stay visible. Be cautious when it is dark or cloudy out, refrain from wearing black, and try not to blend into the background. Ideally, wear light-coloured or reflective clothing.

## 2011 Macphail winner inspired by lifelong passion for activism

By **MATILDA MIRANDA**

Dr. John C. Carter first learned about social activism when his mother, Jean Carter, fought against building an expressway in Kitchener. Although she lost that fight, it instilled in him a passion for volunteering and activism.

"I learned that you can challenge things that you don't believe in," Carter said. "That's what Agnes (Macphail) and my mom did."

Last night, Carter was officially named the 2011 recipient of the Agnes Macphail Award. Each year, the award is given out to an East Yorker who has made significant contributions to the community through volunteering. The award was created in 1994 to celebrate the achievements of Macphail, who advocated for equality rights and social justice.

Carter, who was born in Kitchener-Waterloo, moved to

East York in the late '80s because he liked how closely connected local people were.

"East York was a community that I thought was caring," he said. "The borough of East York reflected some of the virtues of Agnes Macphail."

Carter has acted as a speaker with the East York Seniors' Heritage Groups for the past 10 years.

He's also served as a trustee for the East York Public Library Board and vice-chair and director of heritage with the East York Foundation.

Lorna Krawchuk is chair of the Agnes Macphail recognition committee that picks the award recipient. She says that Carter was this year's recipient because he's so involved in the community.

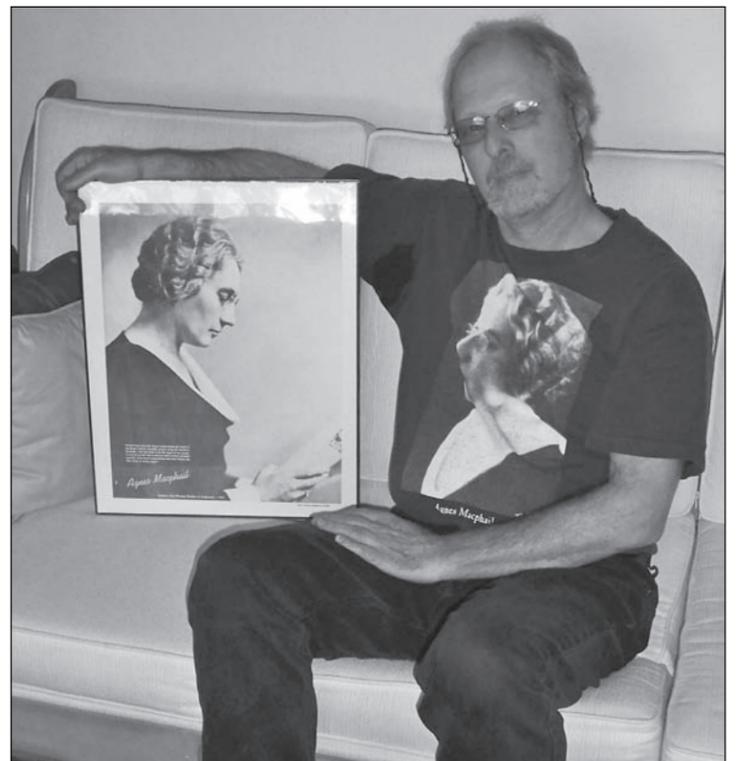
Krawchuk hopes that the award raises the profile of volunteering and the good that it does for East York.

"You can put a face of a neighbour to it. He's somebody you'll see that's being honoured for what they do," she said. "It raises the profile of doing things locally that you're not being paid for."

Like Krawchuk, Carter wants people to be inspired to volunteer. He believes that everybody should do a mix of paid work and volunteering for free.

"A lot of people don't volunteer. They say, 'I can get paid for that. Why should I do it?'" he said. "Part of volunteering is to protect and preserve your own community and to offer services to those that appreciate it. There are a lot of people who are less fortunate than we are."

Carter and Krawchuk are keen on raising awareness of Macphail's successful legacy. Macphail represented East York as an MPP and was the first woman MP in Canada.



Observer, Matilda Miranda

**RESIDENT RECEIVES HONOUR:** Dr. John C. Carter, an advocate for Agnes Macphail, holds (and wears) pictures of her. He was announced as the 2011 recipient of the Agnes Macphail award in a ceremony last night. He wants to raise awareness of the importance of volunteerism and social activism.

# Greektown goes green



Observer, Deeanna Charrion



Observer, Deeanna Charrion



Observer, Deeanna Charrion



Observer, Beth Ford

**LAUGH IT UP:** (Clockwise from top right) In honour of St. Patrick's Day, Giacomo Silvestri, Matt Cain and Geoff Burke (l-r) don festive headgear to celebrate March 17 Celtic-style at Dora Keogh pub on the Danforth. Eton House was already laughing last Tuesday as long-time comedy professional JoAnna Downey (below) hosted Standing at the Danforth. Dave Martin, Nikki Payne and Aaron Berg also tickled some funny bones.



Observer, Deeanna Charrion

## Will it be 'game on' for East York road hockey?

By ALIMA HOTAKIE

Should young East Yorkers prepare to hit the road with their hockey sticks? Some Toronto city councillors are talking about relaxing the current bylaw concerning street hockey.

There's been no definitive move on the part of council to ease the restrictions, but Andrew Phillips, a 19-year-old student at Centennial College's East York campus, welcomes the prospect.

"I think it's fantastic," he said. "I have a lot of fond memories of hanging out with friends. These are friends that I have had for over 10 years that I met while

playing street hockey."

Under the existing bylaw, people caught playing street hockey can be fined \$55. The bylaw, however, is rarely enforced, which might explain why so many are unaware of its existence.

If a complaint is made, the city will post a sign prohibiting ball hockey on the street in question. But this method isn't the most effective or economic.

Ron Hamilton, manager of traffic operations at city hall, thinks this method is not feasible.

"Kids would just play on a different street without a sign," he

said. "So what is the city supposed to do? Post a sign on every single street? And of course,



PHILLIPS

posting signs is very expensive." While many view street hockey as a quintessential Canadian pastime, others worry about safety, liability, property damage and excessive noise. Given the differences between suburban street designs and those in central Toronto, people are concerned about the different impacts that loosening

the bylaw might have in different parts of the city.

Hamilton said many prefabricated subdivisions offer greater insulation from many arteries, whereas much of Toronto's grid pattern design does not offer the same protection from heavy traffic flow.

For example, a suburban cul-de-sac might only service the handful of homes it abuts, whereas one in Toronto might back onto several highrises.

These factors compound the situation.

The city receives complaints mostly due to excessive noise and property damage, Hamil-

ton said. The property damage generally involves cars parked along the road.

"In central Toronto, because the spaces are tighter and there's more parking on the roads we often get broken mirrors," he said.

Another concern is the issue of liability.

Legalizing street hockey "opens up the city to a liability that doesn't currently exist," Hamilton said.

"Let's say the city says you can play street hockey on this street, but what if the street is unsafe and a kid gets hurt? The city would be liable."



Observer, Farhana Uddin

**ICE ICE BABY:** Leaside Memorial Gardens hopes to raise enough money for a second rink. It has already received \$1.5 million from the community and is looking to raise another million. **BELOW:** While the kids are in school, the adults play hockey inside Leaside Memorial Gardens.



# Rink expansion team shoots for fundraising goal

By FARHANA UDDIN

Fundraisers say they're closing in on their goal for community donations to help pay for the expansion of Leaside Memorial Gardens Arena.

They're more than halfway to the \$2.5-million target, with \$1.5 million already raised locally.

The expansion is supposed to cost about \$9.5 million. Most of that is being covered with a \$7-million loan from the city.

But while the Leaside Arena Board — which is helping to spearhead the fundraising — is pleased, it also acknowledges that there may be some tough slogging ahead.

"The first half a million was the easiest to get, because it came from one cheque," said John Parker, city councillor for Ward 26/Don Valley West.

The initial boost, he added, came from "a local family" that wishes to remain anonymous.

"They had enthusiasm for the project and from what I've heard, they're hoping that their children could some day use it," he explained.

Along with other family contributions, the arena board has also received donations from local businesses and schools such as the Greenwood College School.

Assuming things continue to go well, East York residents may well be skating in a bigger arena next year.

That will be a relief to stakeholders like the Leaside Skating Club, the Leaside Minor Hockey Association and the Toronto Leaside Girls Hockey Association, which have had difficulty providing their teams with enough ice time to practise on the arena's one rink. The expansion will add a second rink.

The chairman of the Leaside Arena Expansion Committee, Paul Mercer, said he believes that the project will help eradicate the problems that all three main groups appear to have.

"Those three groups came to the board and said that they don't have enough space to practise and with such little space, they've also had to turn kids away from hockey and skating programs," Mercer said.

"This expansion will give kids who want to play and learn to skate the ability to do so."

In addition to excluding more children, the two hockey leagues that operate out of their competitive divisions have not been able to participate in home-side games.

"In a house league, you want as many games as possible in your local community," said Ron Baker, president of the Toronto Leaside Girls Hockey Association.

"The limited amount of ice doesn't give us the ability to do that. So we're pledging the proceeds of our tournament. We're 100 per cent behind this expansion."

# Student art showcase deemed success

Imagination and creativity mark E.Y. college artists' first formal exhibit

By MICHELLE GRACE

First-year fine arts students from Centennial College's East York campus displayed their work at Latitude 44 with a vision of utopia vs. dystopia in mind.

The show was marked as a first-time formal exhibit for these emerging artists to portray their outlooks on what they consider their own personal utopias and dystopias. From zombies and vampires to sex and love, imagination and creativity were on ample display.

Janet DiBernardo, owner of Latitude 44 on Dundas Street West, is also part of the college's fine arts advisory committee.



Observer, Michelle Grace

**PROUD CREATOR:** Michel Prentice with his personal utopia (combined with dystopia) at Latitude 44.

She was delighted to help the students with the use of her studio space.

"I think it's really important that they get exposed to different galleries and to see what's involved, what to do, and what not to do," DiBernardo said. "They can also get public exposure and feedback. It's an experience they need to start them off right from the beginning."

Melissa Mather is a first-year fine arts student who found her own happy place through her piece titled *Top of the Food Chain*.

"My piece is more of a utopia. When I designed the theme, I thought of how children feel and the feeling you have when you are tiny," Mather said. "I'm more of a happier person, so I wanted to show that through my art."

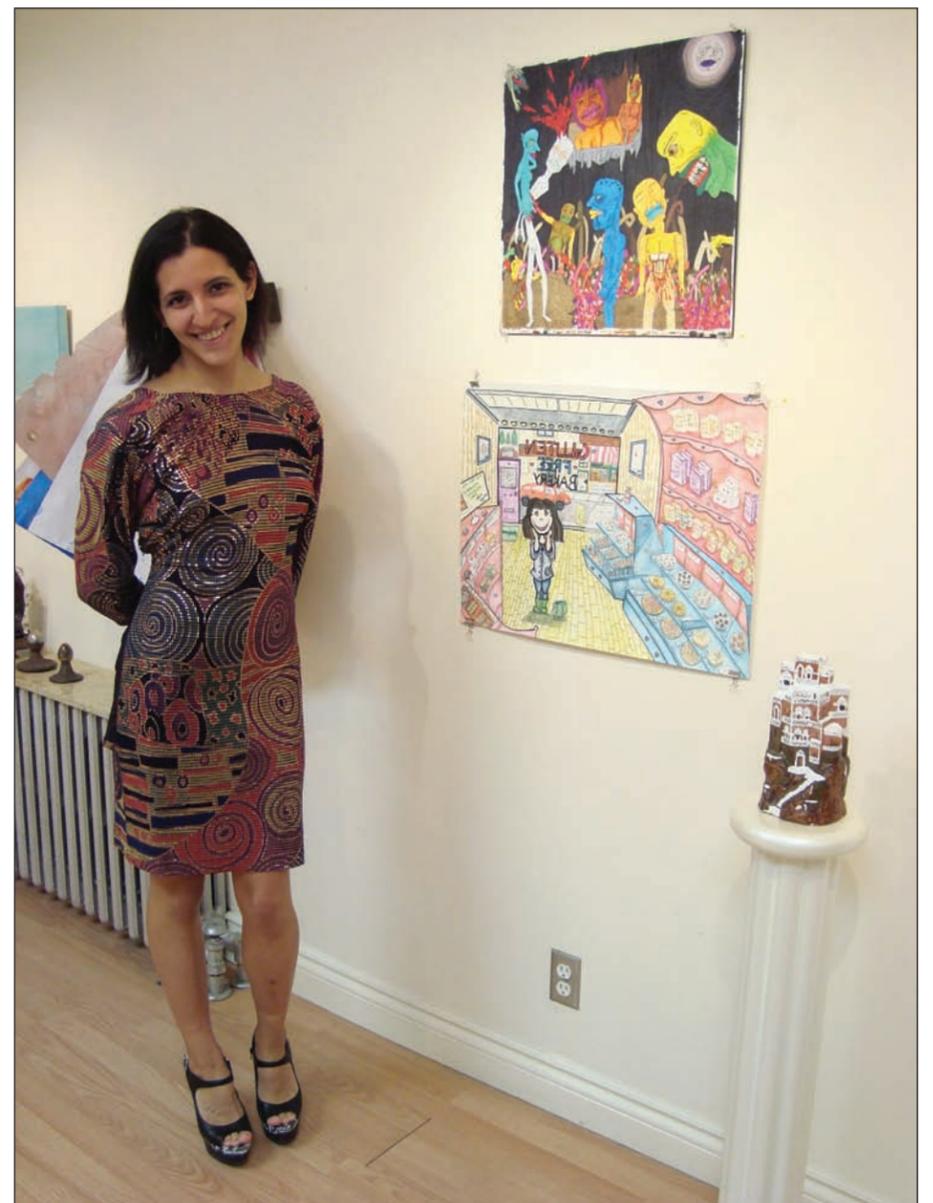
Michel Prentice thought it would be unique to group the feelings of utopia and dystopia into one creation. Since people are always in transition from feeling happy to being upset, it only made sense to him to join forces.

"My piece is a dystopia and utopia because it's about a couple who outside of the bedroom hate each other and can't stand each other, but in the bedroom they reach a form of ecstasy and utopia," Prentice said.

"I like what I do, and I love the course at Centennial. It's great to see all my classmates show their work, and what they perceive as their own personal utopia or dystopia," he said.

DiBernardo was pleased to see the positive response that the gallery had on the community. Not only was it exposure for these young artists, but two paintings were sold by artists Kate Taylor and Michael Tsouras.

"Start out being as professional as you can. Have a bio and portfolio ready, so you can take them to different galleries; be really organized in your career and don't be afraid to ask questions," DiBernardo said.



Observer, Michelle Grace

**ART AND ARTIST:** Melissa Mather shows off her own utopia at Latitude 44 on Dundas Street. Students in the fine arts program at Centennial College's East York campus held an art exhibit at the gallery to display their work.

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## Poisonous politics

Canadians have become increasingly disenchanted with federal politics and elections. They watch as the three major opposition parties race to the centre of the political spectrum, attempting to create the least offensive platforms — instead of pushing for any concrete change. This occurs while one of the most aggressive and partisan governments in a generation attempts to ram its narrow ideological platform through Parliament.

This process reached a climax this week as the Conservative minority government was found to be in contempt of Parliament — a first for a Canadian government. On top of that, the Conservatives then proposed a budget no party would support, resulting in a near-certain spring election. Instead of consulting in good faith and attempting to create a compromise, the Conservatives continued with their typical disdain for parliamentary process and attempted to put the responsibility for the election on the opposition parties.

The actions of Jack Layton, Toronto-Danforth MP and leader of the NDP, reflect the malaise in the Canadian political system. While “The Harper Conservatives” have continually displayed their contempt for parliamentary process and their opposition peers, Layton has barely batted an eyelash. In fact, until Tuesday, he went out of his way to offer his support to a government that had no real intention of making compromises with him.

Instead of calling out Harper's actions for what they are — undemocratic attempts at forcing his partisan agenda through Parliament — Layton instead asked for minor budget concessions.

It says something that so many people were caught off-guard by Layton's flat rejection of the budget on Tuesday. It shows that, in the eyes of many, the NDP has become simply another party of the middle class... and not the party that many used to consider it: a champion of working people and those marginalized by the system.

“Harper had an opportunity to address the needs of hard-working middle-class Canadians and families and he missed that opportunity. He just doesn't get it,” Layton told reporters yesterday after pledging to vote down the budget.

The NDP doesn't get it. In its attempt to prop up a completely dysfunctional government, Layton and the NDP threw the needs of working Canadians not represented in the middle class to the wayside. With such an aggressive party governing, Canada doesn't need more concessions for the middle class. Instead, we need real alternatives to this poisonous political climate.

Let's hope that Jack Layton and the NDP use the coming campaign to stand in real opposition to the Conservatives — instead of mere modifications of the Harper status quo.

—Geoffrey Mosher

## Meters a smart move

The provincial debate concerning smart meters and energy management is heating up this month. The NDP agrees with the Liberals on improving Ontario's energy grid, but they don't like the idea of spending money to install the new technology.

Peter Tabuns, the NDP MPP for Toronto-Danforth, says the billion dollars invested in the meters should go to energy conservation instead. But what happened to the provincial NDP's ‘go green’ platform? Clean energy does not grow on trees. Shifting to renewable energy will not be cheap.

Many homes and small businesses in Ontario are already using the smart meter. And a survey by Hydro One concluded that about 80 per cent of its customers are changing their energy usage patterns.

Minister of Energy, Brad Duguid, said that Hydro One's study also revealed that about half of people are seeing smart meter savings of an average of \$5 a month.

This time-of-use system is similar to buying groceries when they're on sale. Let's say pork chops are on sale for today only. Instead of buying one dinner's worth, you buy two. If you were to buy the second serving tomorrow, you would not have saved. In terms of energy usage, saving up dirty clothes to wash them once a week is more economically sound than using your washing machine every other day.

“The investment in smart meters will accrue revenues of about \$1.6 billion back to energy consumers over the course of the next 15 years,” Duguid told the legislature.

PC Leader Tim Hudak has promised to allow people the option to “unplug” from the smart meter system if elected but this proposal will defeat one of the purposes of installing the meters in the first place: to educate people about the costs of energy.

This system alerts people to be more responsible with their energy usage. These smart meters are a worthwhile investment to modernize Ontario's energy infrastructure helping people to be more efficiently and that will result in savings.

—Dennis Wu

# New smartphones are more than app-ealing

I'm looking forward to April. Not just because it's spring, but because this very special month marks my liberation from a three-year mobile phone contract I've come to despise.

However, the shackles aren't fully off until I find a new plan. Last weekend, while browsing the internet, I concluded that cellphone plans have improved significantly since 2008.

The number of service providers has grown and people seem to be benefiting from the recent sparring between all of these competing phone companies.

And that extends to hardware. When I finally dragged myself into a local retail outlet to ask about a plan, I was overwhelmed by the vibrant display of kitschy devices that resembled everything but a phone.

I did a double take, and then carefully scanned the display for a “real” phone, while thinking to myself: “If only I could use the phone I already have with a new plan.” It's practical and not overdone with bells and whistles.

But as far as selling so-called “unlocked” phones goes, North American cellphone companies have some catching up to do. Most European companies already sell unlocked phones that can move between competing service providers.

Not here.

**Beth  
Ford**



But besides that, the North American cellphone landscape really has changed rapidly. So much so that the three years since acquiring my last phone feels like three light years away from the old cellphone scene.

I flagged down a salesperson who guided me over to the phones that come with the plan I'm interested in.

He showed me an “Android” smartphone that looked like a toy candy bar. It had all the jazzy features I expected of an “android.” It had a full web browser, video calling and seven — yes, seven — home screens where you could customize your own widgets. It's like that toy you always wanted as a kid, but weren't allowed to have.

Then the salesperson (let's call him Iain) let me see one of the non-display phones. Actually, this was his own Android smartphone. When I touched the screen, a little R2-D2 creature lit up the display and started flipping out. A thrill rushed through me... and I forgot the original point of my

visit. Once the display lit up and R2 went into rest mode, the apps Iain had downloaded appeared on the screen.

I remembered a friend telling me, “A smartphone is only as good as the applications that can run on it.” There are free apps and then there are the ones that you can purchase from online stores for what seems like next to nothing, like the myriad available through the Apple iPhone store.

Smartphone applications are like tour guides to all things good. They turn the impossible into the possible in a flash. They can point you to cheap gas (GasBuddy), help manage your finances (Mint) or help you steer clear of speed traps (Trap). They've introduced a new brand of cool. My sister downloaded Skype to her smartphone for free. This may be the closest one can get to compressing the essentials of life into your back pocket.

Well, I could only resist the temptation for so long, before becoming yet another victim of the industry's mass marketing ploy to have most of the population hooked on internet phones.

So I pulled out my shopping list of simple criteria and added a jazzy new feature... or two... or eight.

All I need now is an app to explain how to make a call on one of these things.

## Social media can result in some anti-social behaviour

These days it seems that your friends are more likely to “poke” you on Facebook to say hello than to pick up the phone. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare have supposedly been designed to bring people together. But in my opinion, they're keeping people apart.

The convenience of sending someone a quick text message instead of calling or even visiting him or her seems to have a worldwide appeal.

But this undeniable fact has left me wondering: Are we interacting or hiding?

These sites advertise the simplicity of reconnecting with old friends who you've lost touch with along the way.

But this method of communication has created a generation that seems uncomfortable actually venturing outdoors to interact with other human beings. Endless plans are made; yet they rarely come to fruition. Young people have be-

**Cheronne  
Thurab**



come too comfortable sitting behind a computer as a means of socializing.

Gone are the days when one person would invite the other to meet them out for a few hours of one-on-one interaction. About as close as some now come to that is to set up a quick event invitation online and invite as many people as possible.

While this idea is great in theory, people tend to get excited by the possibility of inviting everyone on their friends list. So what in past years would have been an intimate soiree becomes a free-for-all for anyone with internet access. Quality has been traded for quan-

tity.

As more social networking sites pop up on the internet, people get further away from real interactions and become more comfortable with typing. The human voice has become more of a novelty than anything else.

Some might suggest that the solution to this problem is simple: Shut down the websites. But it's not that easy.

Social networking has become so ingrained in our everyday lives that it's almost an addiction. What may be helpful for this generation is a slow transition from texting to calling.

And you never know.... The thrill of hearing another person's voice may just prompt more phone calls.

So the next time you reach for your smartphone to send your friend a message, try dialing their number to hear their voice. It may very well lead to a very satisfying outcome.

## We welcome your input

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Observer, Cheronne Thurab

**MUSIC TO THEIR EARS:** (Left to right) Myra Khan, Zaynah Khan, 2, Caden Shahab, 11 months, and Aisha Shahab enjoyed a performance by Danny Fernandes at the Ontario Science Centre on Tuesday, during the JUNOs Live Music Lab. The lab concludes today.

## Celebrating science of sound

By **CHERONNE THURAB**

“Step 1, 2, 3, 4 ... 5, 6, 7, 8 ... and after that, we’re going to lean to the left,” Romeo Casselas said to his group of young dancers. The children danced to the beat of Danny Fernandes’ songs as Fernandes and choreographer Casselas counted out the steps to the moves they created for the occasion.

Both the singer and choreographer attended the JUNOs Live Music Lab at the Ontario Science Centre on March 22. The lab, which ran from March 21-25, featured a different JUNO-nominated artist every day.

Anna Relyea, director of strategic communications at the Sci-

ence Centre, said the goal of the one-hour workshops was to help children explore the dynamics of science and music together. They offered all participants the opportunity to get to know a new artist in their specific field of entertainment.

“It’s all about fusing culture with science,” Relyea said. “Science is actually part of culture and many forms of science are included in music (with) rhythms and beats.”

This specific workshop taught kids the importance of music and beats in relation to body movement and dance. Relyea was excited about the JUNOs’ involvement with the Science

Centre’s various programs.

“We have a partnership with the JUNO awards and it consists of a number of things,” she said. “They’ve sponsored our music innovation project with our science school.”

Visitors on school trips or families enjoying a casual day were able to enjoy the festivities.

Myra Khan brought her two-year-old daughter Zaynah in for a fun day at the Science Centre with her friend, Aisha Shahab, and Shahab’s 11-month-old son, Caden.

“It was a lot of fun, very well put together,” Khan said. “(Zaynah) was doing her dance on the side.”

## Vision split on in-school screens

By **ALISSA RANDALL**

East York trustee Sheila Cary-Meagher used some strong language in her opposition to this month’s failed bid for school TVs carrying school programming and advertising.

“It is absolutely shameful that we are being forced to prostitute ourselves and sell access to our children just because we are an under-funded school system,” Meagher said at the March 9 meeting of the Toronto District School Board. “We’re here to educate our students, not sell their souls.”

Cary-Meagher, the trustee for Ward 16/Beaches-East York, was debating a proposal to install video screens that feature school programming and advertising.

Video screens were installed in four downtown high schools as part of a pilot project. The board voted not to expand the

screens to 70 more schools.

School announcements, exam dates, and the weather are some of the content displayed on the pilot screens. But under the expansion proposal, 30 per cent of the time would have been reserved for advertising on a small portion of the screen.

Some of the “non-commercial” ads would have included information about governments, universities, and milk. These ads would have required approval by the school board.

OneStop Media, a company that operates the screens on subway platforms, would have provided the television screens in school hallways. — and would have paid \$1,300 for every school that participated in the project.

Another East York trustee, Gerri Gershon of Ward 13/Don Valley West, was in favour of the plan. She said individual school communities have the right to

decide if they want their schools to have the video screens, based on a consensus among parents and students.

But student trustee Zane Schwartz, a Grade 12 student from Leaside High School, said the overall consensus among student councils across the city is that they don’t want advertising on the screens.

He said the students agree that the video screens have potential benefits, but they don’t agree with the advertising component.

All of the trustees also said they support the positive outcomes of the screens, such as their use for student-generated content. The critics of the plan based their opposition on the commercialism — and the principle of ‘selling access’ to students in order to generate revenue for schools that they consider underfunded.

## Hospital finalizing purchase of former school board offices

By **BETH FORD**

A reminder of a bygone era, the former headquarters of the now-defunct East York Board of Education is likely to soon become an official part of Toronto East General Hospital.

The building at 840 Coxwell Ave., at the corner of Mortimer, is currently leased out to TEGH for \$5 million annually by the East York board’s successor, the amalgamated Toronto District School Board.

With the 10-year lease up in the fall, the hospital wants to take ownership of the space and begin physically separating some of the infrastructure currently shared with adjoining R.H. McGregor Elementary School.

The hospital currently uses its part of the building as a medical centre, and TEGH vice-president Ralph Fernando said he is optimistic about finalizing the purchase of the space.

He said the hospital and school board have settled on a price, which he said would not be made public until the sale is finalized.

“We are working closely with the school board on it,” Fernando said. “We’ve negotiated a price and will be signing a purchase sale agreement shortly.”

All of the utilities are currently shared between the hospital’s

medical centre and the adjoining school. Fernando said one of the first things to happen once the hospital takes possession of its side of the building will be to separate that infrastructure.

“Right now all of our utilities are shared, and if we want to do repairs we’ll have to work with the school and vice-versa,” he said.

The construction project, estimated at just over \$1.2 million, will include new boilers to heat the school and a new hydro transformer as well as reconfiguration of pipes and sprinkler systems.

Now that the brunt of negotiations is over, the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC), which is the real estate arm of the TDSB and negotiated the sale price for the deal, will see the details through.

Once approved by school board trustees, work will begin almost immediately — and is scheduled to be completed by the early fall.

The chief executive of the TLC, Shirley Hoy, said the sale of the former board of education building will not be any great loss to the school board.

“The TDSB will benefit by way of revenues generated by the sale of the former East York Board of Education site,” she said.



Observer, Beth Ford

**BACK IN SESSION?** The hospital is reflected in the front windows of the TEGH medical centre, which is in the former East York Board of Education building. The crowning clock with the defunct board’s logo serves as a reminder of days of old.

## Parties prepare for battle in E.Y. on eve of election call

Cont’d. from page 1

Jack Layton has been telling interviewers that while he’s noticeably thinner and using a cane lately, he’s “better by the day” after hip surgery and treatment for prostate cancer — and he feels ready for the rigours of campaigning.

Three years ago, Layton beat his nearest rival, Andrew Lang, by 16 percentage points.

Lang, the son of Trudeau-era justice minister Otto Lang, is

reprising his run as Toronto-Danforth’s Liberal opposition to Layton. A biography submitted to the Observer describes Lang’s work across the public and private sectors — including as an aide to both federal and provincial government ministers and “with a healthcare not-for-profit and an environmental NGO.”

His website takes sharp aim at Layton — whom Lang says is “forsaking children, the environment and aboriginals.”

The Conservatives ran fourth behind the Greens in Toronto-Danforth in 2008, and Tory officials did not return Observer phone calls about a candidate or nominating process there.

Nor is the Tory known in Beaches-East York, where in 2008, veteran Liberal MP Maria Minna won by nine points over the NDP runner-up, former MPP Marilyn Churley.

This time, the New Democrats are putting forward political

newcomer Matthew Kellway.

Kellway’s campaign literature describes him as a policy analyst and a former economist. He helped found and chair the Toronto Energy Coalition, fighting the establishment of the Portlands gas-fired hydro generating station on the waterfront.

“I’ve proven myself as an advocate for this community,” he said in a website statement.

For her part, incumbent Minna criticizes the Conservatives’

spending choices. She would like to see more money go into things like education, housing, health care and pensions, and less into new prisons and fighter jets.

“We need planes, but not the ones that the Conservatives are buying, and not at that price, and not without any bidding going on,” she said on Wednesday.

— **With files from Kristin Annable, Geoffrey Mosher, Alissa Randall**

# DREAM comes true



Photo courtesy of Katie Bowser



Observer, Kristin Annable



Observer, Kristin Annable

**TEACH TO LEARN:** (Clockwise from top) East York college journalism student Kristin Annable, 26 (right), teaches a workshop with DREAM volunteer Maria Luna (left). Students were taught effective interviewing techniques in preparation for writing a story on Haitian rights in the Dominican Republic. (Right) Students work on battery-powered propellers. (Left) Students take part in a workshop on what makes airplanes fly. As a fun activity, aviation technician student Woosung Nam had them create paper airplanes.

## Students teach, learn in Dominican Republic

By **KRISTIN ANNABLE**

The city of Cabarete straddles two extreme strata of the Dominican Republic: wealthy tourists on its shore with impoverished citizens in its core.

For two weeks this month, seven Centennial College students, including delegates from the East York campus, were in the Dominican to see this firsthand.

This "Global Citizenship and Equity Learning Expedition" was sponsored by the college, and had been a dream of international education project guide Rachel Larabee for years. She worked with the college to see her vision come to fruition.

"I wanted to expose students to an experience of global citizenship. I believe that only when we get out of our comfort zone can we understand the different ways people live," she said.

"Everyone associates the Dominican with tourism and resorts. I know firsthand from working in the Dominican that outside of the resorts there are people who need help. People call it paradise. But some Dominicans don't even have access to basic human services."

Larabee lived for a time in the Dominican Republic and started a non-profit organization called POR AMOR. This gave her the experience to create a pilot program with Centennial and send students to the Dominican for the first time last year.

"It was a such a success that this year they sent two groups to the Dominican and one to Peru. Hopefully they will send out more next year," she said.

The expedition was called TeachtoLearn, with the objective of having Centennial students from different programs

work with a Dominican school called the DFBR Education Center to teach workshops to the children enrolled in the school.

The school is, in turn, run by a non-governmental organization called the DREAM project. Since students in the Dominican only attend school for half the day, the DREAM



**LARABEE**

project aims to fill in the gaps of an underserved education system.

"Education in the Dominican is pitiful. I think it is a defamation of a basic human right. Everyone has the right to education," Larabee said.

"There is a lot of money in the country and some people

are living wealthy lives. The government does not invest in education. It is only through non-profit and social enterprises that we can take education out of the hands of the government and into the hands of the people and make it better."

Katie Bowser, 22, is a fine arts student at Centennial's East York campus. In her workshop, she taught a group of students aged 9-12 about expressing themselves and their lives through art.

She asked them to take pictures and draw things that represented darkness (bad) and lightness (good).

"I was shocked with what they came up with. I thought they would draw simple things like their mean brother or a food they liked," Bowser said.

"Instead, one student drew a picture of garbage, because she

hated the way it made her community look. Another drew a picture of a dog because he felt they acted as a protector for him and his family."

Other workshops included interviewing skills, airplane mechanics, team-building exercises and how to communicate better in personal relationships. The aim was to have students from different disciplines offering the children information they may not receive in their regular education.

Larabee hopes the workshops did not just help the children, but helped open the eyes of the Canadian college students.

"If I show one person and that person shows three others and then that person shows three others, that is how you raise awareness," she said. "Change can happen. Nothing happens if you just write a cheque to something you have never seen."