



■ COMMUNITY



Jacqueline Thetsombandith /// The Observer

### Capturing 'home' on paper

Students at Centennial College's Carlaw Avenue campus work on a mural called "Home Means..." It was part of last week's observance of Displaced Persons Awareness Week. (More coverage on page 4.)

## Goodwill in employees' bad graces

By EDEN DEBEBE  
and RAQUEL RUSSELL  
The Observer

There is anything but good will in the wake of Goodwill's closure in East York — and across the secondhand retailer's network in Toronto and other parts of Ontario.

One former customer of the 60 Overlea Blvd. location, Raj Khan, told an Observer reporter that someone should start a successor store and call it "Betterwill."

"Better will than the Goodwill and (that of) the CEO," he said.

The Overlea location was especially handy to shoppers from the nearby neighbourhoods of Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park. And Goodwill's mandate was helpful to that area too: the provision of quality used merchandise at low prices — along with the employment of people otherwise marginalized in the job market, like recent immigrants, the disabled and people with criminal records.

Many East Yorkers were surprised by the sudden Sunday shuttering of the Leaside location; so much so, in fact, that people initially continued to pull up to 60 Overlea, unload goods onto a growing pile outside the door, and drive off — apparently expecting an imminent re-opening that never came.

But most agree that it's the employees who are the real victims of Goodwill's Jan. 17 shut-down. There are about 450 of them, almost all

■ See GOODWILL, page 3

## Possible change in lice policy has parents' skin crawling

TDSB reviewing its 'no-nit' stance after pediatric society changes recommendations

By CHELSEA WARD  
The Observer

Last year, Dawn Mucci's 12-year-old daughter was sent home from school with lice three times in the span of three months. Now that the Toronto District School Board is considering changing its exclusion policy for children with lice, she's concerned, as a mother, it will happen again.

But as the founder of a Canada-wide lice removal company with a branch in East York, she's also anticipating an uptick — up-nit? — in customers.

"From a professional standpoint, it's going to be great for my business," said Mucci, CEO of Lice Squad. "But from a parent standpoint, I'm going to be pretty upset if my child comes home again with lice because the school's not doing anything about it."

The TDSB is in the process of reviewing its policy regarding head lice after Toronto Public Health recommended new ways of



Chelsea Ward /// The Observer

Lice Squad employee Tonja Scepanovic combs a child's hair as part of a lice check at the company's East York location.

dealing with the tiny parasites.

Currently, the board operates under a strict 'no-nit' policy that bans students from returning to school until their lice infestation has been properly treated.

According to Ryan Bird, spokesperson for the TDSB, the board will be reviewing its stance in light of the change in Toronto Public Health's head lice policy. That was spurred by a position statement from the

Canadian Paediatric Society that "exclusion from school and daycare due to the detection of the presence of 'nits' does not have sound medical rationale," he said.

"As Toronto Public Health advises the TDSB on health matters, staff are now looking at our current procedure to determine if any changes are needed or required."

Toronto Public Health spokesperson Vincenza Pietropaolo explained that policy changes were made to be consistent with recommendations offered by the Canadian Paediatric Society, a national association of pediatricians representing all provinces and territories.

"Toronto Public Health became aware that the Canadian Paediatric Society does not recommend excluding students from school due to pediculosis (head lice)," he said. "TPH therefore recently updated our policy to be consistent with these recommendations."

The possibility of changing the school board's policy has been met with concern from parents who don't view the changes as beneficial or hygienic.

East York mother of three Tamera Kreemer remembers being kicked out of school for

■ See TORONTO, page 3



## POLICE & FIRE

### Woman, 85, succumbs to injuries after being struck by vehicle

An elderly woman who was struck by a car two weeks ago has died. The woman, who was 85, was attempting to cross the street at Bayview Avenue near Eglinton Avenue East at around 2:30 p.m. the afternoon of Jan. 15 when she was hit by a car. The 20-year-old driver of the Dodge Journey that struck her was trying to make a right turn. The woman succumbed to her injuries in the hospital five days after the accident. Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call police at 416-808-1900 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

### Man taken to hospital after being shot several times

A man was sent to the hospital with serious wounds on Sunday, Jan. 24, after a shooting at Wakunda Place, just off O'Connor Drive between Eglinton Avenue East and St. Clair Avenue East. Police were called to a home on Wakunda at around 3:23 a.m. on Sunday. The victim is in his mid-20s and had been shot several times. The investigation is continuing. However, as of press time, there were still no suspects.

~ Yeye Zhu



Carmen Tortorelli // The Observer

Six-year-old Tasha, a miniature poodle, enjoys her regular Sunday afternoon walk while wearing a jacket and boots to protect herself from the cold weather.

## More than just fashion

These boots are made for walking — dogs, that is — during our wintry weather

By CARMEN TORTORELLI  
The Observer

Some people dismiss dogs in jackets and boots as mere canine couture. But those accessories aren't just fashion statements; they're actually good protection for our four-legged friends in winter months.

On a relatively chilly afternoon, six-year-old Tasha, a miniature poodle, is decked out for the weather. That's because Tasha's owner, Anna, is all too familiar with climate-related injuries to her dogs.

"It has happened before where I've had her for a walk, the ice on the pavement would break the skin and sometimes you could see blood marks," Anna said. "My dogs have always been small, so I can pick them up and carry them if something happens to their paws."

She conceded that the first time she put boots on Tasha and her other dogs, they were not happy about it, but now, "as long as they know they're going for a

walk, they'll put them on."

The type of boot varies, depending on whether the owner wants disposable or reusable. Boots also come in thick or thin variations.

A product like Paws Jawz promotes itself as helpful in pulling footwear over dogs' paws. It's used to initially stretch the boot and is then released when the boot is under the dog's foot — essentially a shoehorn for dogs.

Diane Schickerowsky of Tails Pet Store on Coxwell Avenue agreed that the boots made for dogs weren't created for fashion.

"It's for safety reasons, for protection from the salt, the cold, the ice and it protects from the sharp salt getting between the pads and cutting them."

Canine clothing, such as jackets, is also good protection. Full winter coats range from sizes 6-38. But jettison any thought of equivalency with human sizes; those numbers relate to the number of inches from the dog's neck to the tailbone.

"It's like how you put coats on horses," Schickerowsky said. As for the utility of the clothing, "it has to do with protecting their organs if they get too cold. The smaller animals — they're more impact-

ed by cold quickly and they don't have a dense coat like huskies.

"If the dog's hair is long, don't think that automatically means the dog is warmer, because if they have the type of hair that gets tangled, matted long hair does not insulate," she added. "Say someone has a poodle; matting is like a solid tangle, it's like dreadlocks. Basically, it gets really dense and there's no pockets of air in there so it doesn't have the insulating layer."

For that reason, Schickerowsky explained, grooming can be just as important as cold-weather wear.

"So a lot of people are putting jackets on a dog and it rubs the hair so it makes it mat faster, which means they actually would be colder than if they got an actual haircut or came in for brushing and got rid of all of those tangles," she said.

"Everybody thinks short in the summer and long in the winter, but it doesn't always work that way. Just because it's winter doesn't mean your dog shouldn't have a short hairdo."

Beyond clothing, there are other products to help dogs weather this weather — like wax-based creams that protect, moisturize and help heal the paw.

## Suspects sought in painkiller theft

By YEYE ZHU  
The Observer

Toronto police have released security camera photos of two men wanted in the theft of painkillers worth about \$1,400 from an East York pharmacy.

Two men walked into the Shoppers Drug Mart near Pape and Cosburn avenues at around 12:15 p.m. on Jan. 12, placed a large quantity of pain-relief medication in their jackets and left without paying, police said.

One suspect is described as black, 25-35 years old, with a black mustache and short black hair.

He wore a large black winter coat with grey stripes, a grey and black winter hat with ear flaps and grey fur, a grey plaid collared shirt and gold-rimmed sunglasses.



Photo courtesy of Toronto Police Services

Police have released a photo of two men wanted in the theft of painkillers from a local Shoppers Drug Mart.

The other suspect is described as black, 25-35, with a black goatee. He wore a large black winter coat with a fur-rimmed hood, blue jeans, black boots and a baseball cap with a light blue rim and a large

logo on the front.

Anyone with information is asked to contact 54 Division at 416-808-5400 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

## WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

### Warm up with a scarf or two

Bundle up this winter with handmade knitted items made by the volunteers of Michael Garron Hospital, formerly Toronto East General. Items can be purchased at a craft sale this afternoon, Jan. 29, until 2 p.m. The hospital is at 825 Coxwell Ave. For more information, contact Angela Pappaianni at 416-469-6580 or apapp@tegh.

### Crafty kids invited to card workshop

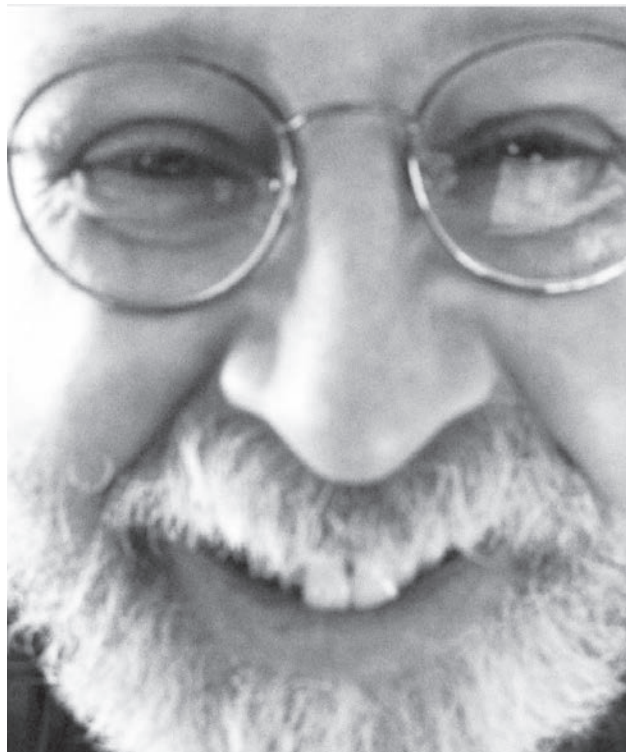
Make a card for a cause this Valentine's Day. The Toronto Public Library Riverdale branch, at 370 Broadview Ave., is inviting children and teens (ages 12-18) to create cards for local Meals on Wheels clients this Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 3:30 p.m. Supplies are provided and the cost is free. For more information call 416-393-7720.

### Speed dating for singles

Enjoy live jazz, snacks and enter for a door prize at the Toronto Rotary Club's Speed Dating Night on Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. Singles aged 25-39 and 40-55 are invited to join in at Whistler's Grille, 995 Broadview Ave. Entry is \$50 per person. Book your spot at [tercspeeedating.eventbrite.com](http://tercspeeedating.eventbrite.com). Contact Jim Cremidas at 416-461-0925 for more information.

~ Sarah Samwel





Justin Vieira /// The Observer

Fine arts professor David McClyment (left) displays his memories of the JFK assassination in his latest exhibit. The show is called *Gone (Again)* and is being featured at the David Kaye Gallery at 1092 Queen St. W. until Sunday.

# Artist puts memories of JFK on canvas

By JUSTIN VIEIRA  
The Observer

In 1963, when artist David McClyment was 10 years old, he recalls his Grade 3 teacher crying as she announced to his class that U.S. President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated.

“What was going on? My teacher crying?” McClyment remembered thinking. While it may not have registered when he was 10, he sensed the assassination had significance in his life and his artistic expression.

“The assassination introduced the world to the reality of modern public life,” McClyment said. Years later, the resulting piece of art he created for his exhibition, *Gone (Again)*, explores this theme.

The show is on through this Sunday, Jan. 31, at the David Kaye Gallery, 1092 Queen St. W.

McClyment is the co-ordinator of the Fine Arts Studio program at Centennial College’s East York campus on Carlaw Avenue. Galleries have shown his work across the GTA, throughout the province and in-

ternationally.

Frequently in his work, McClyment likes to depict his personal life. In one of his previous shows, *Dreaming I was a Crow Dreaming*, he used a mixture of carbon and charcoal to capture the crows. Why crows?

“Charcoal is black. Crows are black. A coincidence? I think not,” McClyment said.

“They are fun to draw and allow the viewer to quickly get into the imagery. They (crows) become stand-ins for all kinds of human behaviour. And while I didn’t consider it at the beginning, crows are frequently the embodi-

ment of the ‘trickster’ in many cultures.”

McClyment has lectured, run workshops and taught art-related courses for over 20 years in 10 different colleges and universities across Ontario.

He said he tries to inspire his students to be passionate and to love what you’re doing as an artist.

“I tend not to think of myself as a teacher, but more of a mentor. That is, an artist working with other artists,” McClyment said. “I have been on the planet a little longer, so I am happy to share what I have learned.”

# Toronto board’s lice policy currently under review

Parents itching to air concerns on new anti-nit Facebook page

Cont’d. from page 1

two weeks when she attended public school because she had head lice.

“I sat on a toilet for two weeks while my mom tried to get rid of them,” she recalled. “It was not fun and ultimately pointless as I went back to school and within a week, a kid got it again.”

According to Toronto Public Health, head lice are tiny, wingless insects that crawl from head to head. They can survive on the head for up to 30 days at a time and can be contracted more than once if not treated correctly.

Parents have been sharing their thoughts on a

Facebook page called Stop the New Head Lice Protocol. Many have posted stories detailing the stress of treating their children’s lice infestations, which seems to be the root of many parents’ frustration.

For those who turn to professionals, such as the Lice Squad, for help, the costs can add up. Mucci’s company charges anywhere from \$75 to \$225 per visit, depending on the extent of the problem.

In most cases, according to the company’s website, only one treatment is necessary.

“It’s an issue that’s communicable, it’s time-consuming, it’s frustrating and it can be costly if you’re repeatedly having to deal with it,” Mucci said.

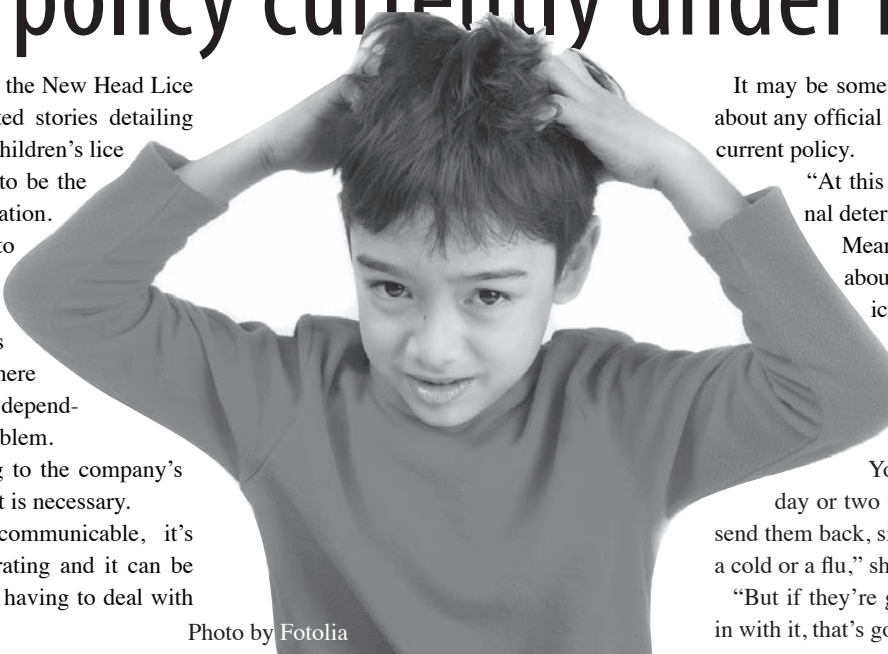


Photo by Fotolia

It may be some time before parents find out about any official changes to the school board’s current policy.

“At this point, there have been no final determinations,” Bird said.

Meanwhile, Mucci is of two minds about the proposed change in policy.

“When they’re talking about excluding children from school, you don’t have to exclude anybody.

You keep your child home for a day or two while they’re contagious and send them back, simply as though the child has a cold or a flu,” she said.

“But if they’re going to allow them to come in with it, that’s going to be great for business.”

# Goodwill employees facing crisis after store closures

Cont’d. from page 1

were low-wage to begin with, and now they’re out of work.

So those ex-employees are protesting the chain’s closure. And many are also calling for the resignation of Keiko Nakamura, the Goodwill CEO for Toronto and other parts of the province.

Most urgently, they’re waiting for their records of employment for the purposes of applying for unemployment insurance. But another concern, about their final pay, lifted last Friday when most received those cheques.

Nakamura addressed the controversy swirling around Goodwill’s failure and its

suddenness at a press conference last week.

“In order to ensure that we were not asking staff to work at a time when we didn’t feel we would be able to cover their costs, we had to close down the stores,” she said.

But Donna Morrison Lindell, who teaches in the corporate communications program at Centennial College’s East York campus, questioned the way the closures were handled. She said the corporate announcement posed more questions than it answered.

“They’ve got to resolve this and they’ve got to resolve this with certainty,” Lindell said. “I think the public deserves some straight answers.... What’s the role of the national office? Are they intercepting at all

on this?”

The Canadian Airport Workers Union (CAWU), which represents Goodwill employees, promised that it was “appealing to all government and community stakeholders to find a solution to the present crisis faced by all workers.”

In a letter to Premier Kathleen Wynne’s office asking her to intervene, CAWU vice-president Artan Milaj said Goodwill has “become an institution and much-needed resource in our communities.”

Nakamura was CEO of Toronto’s Community Housing Corporation before being fired in 2011 after an organizational spending scandal and the resulting breakup of the TCHC board.

The CAWU says that it has “put (investors) in contact with Goodwill and has encouraged Goodwill to seriously consider relinquishing control to the new investors.” But when asked if she would consider stepping down, Nakamura replied that “clear instructions from the board of directors (were given) to move forward.”

How the employees and customers will move forward remains to be seen. That former customer outside 60 Overlea, Raj Khan, said he was a regular who bought affordable clothing and toys for his two children.

“This centre ... was very helpful for... new immigrants (and) low-income families,” he said.



# Helping newcomers adapt to new country

By RIDA TALPUR  
The Observer

Dr. Noushad Jamal remembers why he chose to start a new chapter of his life in Canada.

"This place has always made me feel safe," he said in an interview.

Jamal was a well-known Shia-Muslim radiologist in Pakistan. But Shia doctors and other Shia professionals are being targeted by extremist groups in that country, and Jamal's life had been threatened numerous times.

He used to visit Canada to see his sister, and during one of those visits, he decided to tell Immigration Canada that he didn't feel safe in Pakistan.

Eventually, his refugee claim was accepted, and so was his work visa application.

He moved from a friend's home in Thorncliffe Park to Mississauga, where he helped start the Canadian Academy of Health and Management. That's a training business to help refugees and new immigrants get Canadian certification for the jobs they were trained for in their home countries.

Jamal said he couldn't have made it to this point without the help of settlement services available in Thorncliffe Park and elsewhere.



Yasmin Ashraf is a settlement counsellor at the Crescent Town Club, at East York's southeast corner. That's a branch of COSTI — an initiative started 30 years ago to help new immigrants and refugees adapt to

Canada by providing resources to help with education, mental health, employment, and housing.

"Refugees and new immigrants have always been coming to Canada, and we provide them the resources they need to get their new lives started," Ashraf said.

The Syrian refugee crisis has sparked debate



Rida Talpur /// The Observer

**Dr. Noushad Jamal, a radiologist from Pakistan, escaped extremist violence and came to Canada as a refugee.**

and discussion among some Canadians, especially since the new Liberal government promised to welcome thousands of Syrians here.

But what may be overlooked during these debates is that refugees have been living in Canada peacefully and productively for years. And the East York area, particularly the Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park neighbourhoods, have been traditional "gateways" for them.

Jennifer Rajasekar is the settlement program

co-ordinator in the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office branch of COSTI. Settlement services, language classes, immigration information, job services, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) information, citizenship classes, and trauma and mental health services are just a few of the resources that her office helps refugees connect with.

"Seeing all of these people succeed gives you a spark in life," she said of the refugees she

helps out in Thorncliffe.

Jamal added that in his time as a newcomer in Thorncliffe, services were readily available, helpful and accessible.

He said he encourages new refugees to take advantage of the services, but more importantly, to take charge of their own life in Canada.

"Integrate yourself, educate yourself, and love this country. There is none other like it in the world," he said.

## Syrian refugee process designed to 'maximize success'

By BOGDAN STANCIU  
The Observer

The arrival of Syrian refugees here is the culmination of a months-long process. The final stretch has been outlined partly in the five-phase plan put out by the citizenship and immigration ministry, but here's a closer look at what's been happening overseas and what was put in place to facilitate the process.

The first phase of the plan involved identifying potential refugee applicants. The Canadian government has largely relegated the task to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR); however Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has requested that a priority be placed on "vulnerable refugees."

Nancy Chan, communications advisor for the CIC, says the reason is an "effort to maximize the success in resettlement while minimizing security risks."

Currently, these refugees are primarily in three locations: Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. The UNHCR has operations in Lebanon and Jordan, whereas refugees in Turkey are being handled by the Turkish government.

Once a potential applicant has been identified, the UN sends out a text message to the cellphone number provided by the family.

However, in an initial wave of messages sent late last year, of more than 40,000 messages sent, only 28,000 of the numbers were shown to be working.

Further complicating the government's plan have been the results of a UN survey done in November. Messages gauging interest in



Jacqueline Thetsombandith /// The Observer

**To mark last week's observance of Displaced Persons Awareness Week, students at Centennial College's East York campus participated in a collaborative art exhibition focusing on images of "home."**

resettling in Canada were sent out to refugees in Lebanon and Jordan. Only 6.3 per cent showed interest.

John McCallum, the new immigration minister, spoke on the numbers at a press conference held last month.

"Why there is such a low percentage is nothing I can speak on with certainty," he said. "I'm confident we'll find easily 25,000 people who want to come here because we're talking about millions of people who want to come here."

He's not wrong. Many thousands of resettlement applications are in process with the CIC.

The sheer number of refugees Canada is expected to process has resulted in 500 temporary visa officers being deployed to two

visa offices in Lebanon and Jordan. Both of the offices are solely for processing refugees destined for Canada. Once a refugee has responded to a text message regarding a potential application, they go to these offices, and then through extensive security and medical testing.

An onus is placed on these two parameters because of the government's stated concern for Canadians. One protocol says that "the health and safety of Canadian citizens will not be jeopardized," for instance, and so applicants found to have communicable diseases are treated or quarantined until their condition improves — and only then do they advance through the process.

The Full Immigration Medical Exam, as it's called, is a slew of tests which are done

on all potential Canadian citizens. The federal government is covering all costs of the refugee's IMEs, a roughly \$230 expenditure per person. The exam is exhaustive.

Once all of the requirements are fulfilled, the refugees are given visas and officially become permanent residents. But they still have to get here.

Early in this process, most arrived on aircraft coming into Toronto's Lester B. Pearson airport and Montreal's Pierre Elliot Trudeau airport. The aircraft have been CC-150 Polarises, the military designation for Airbus A-310s that the Royal Canadian Air Force has in its fleet. One CC-150 can transport up to 194 refugees.

But military aircraft usage for transportation will not be the norm. Instead, chartered flights will be primarily used. Capt. Thomas Edelson, spokesperson for the RCAF, has said that the military will only step in to provide support as needed, and only as often as once every 48 hours.

Instead, the flights will be chartered from commercial airlines and managed by the International Organization for Migration.

Once in Canada, the refugees-turned-residents have only one more barrier: the Quarantine Act.

As with all other incoming permanent residents, they are once again screened for illnesses, and provided medication and support as needed.

After this, Canada welcomes the new residents and they travel to East York and other communities across the country.



# The world loses a world-changer

Author, disability advocate and proud Pan Am Games flag-bearer was the inspiration for Archie Comics character

By SARAH SAMWEL  
The Observer

The pen was a powerful tool in the hands of Jewel Kats. The author of 11 children's books, she wrote the kinds of stories that she never read growing up, ones that featured people with disabilities, like her.

Using her pen, she crafted characters that were heroes of their own stories and featured people who were empowered by their disability and not limited by it. Disabilities were something to be celebrated. Kats called her stories "fairy ability tales." Her books included such titles as *Cinderella's Magical Wheelchair: An Empowering Fairy Tale*, *The Princess and the Ruby: An Autism Fairy Tale* and *DitzAble Princess*.

Born Michelle Meera Katyal, Kats, who studied journalism at Centennial College's East York campus, died on Jan. 7 due to complications of a bowel obstruction. She was 37.

Probably best known as the real-life inspiration behind Harper Lodge, the first and only Archie Comics character to be in a wheelchair, Kats' confidence was matchless.

A long-time fan of Archie Comics, Kats approached Dan Parent, the current artist and writer, at a comic book convention in 2013. She asked him why there wasn't a single character with a disability. Unable to give a good answer, Parent worked with her to create Harper, an advice columnist with the same fearless personality as Kats.

Kats' mother, Renu Katyal, said she was immensely proud of her daughter's accomplishment. "Every parent wants to see success in their child and this was a big success," she said.

From an early age, Kats was recognized for her writing talent. Although she only spoke Hin-

di until she reached school, she learned English quickly and developed a passion for writing and books. Her essays and writings always managed to catch her teachers' attention.

When she was nine, none of the offerings at the school book fair interested Kats so her mother decided to take her to the bookstore at the mall. It was there that somebody hit their car and caused severe damage to Kats' leg.

"Her accident was because of books," Katyal said.

The next three months of her life would be spent at the Hospital for Sick Children recovering from the accident. During this time, she found her comfort in Archie Comics, starting a life-

long love affair.

As Kats got older, her bubbly and affectionate personality would win over many hearts and the impact of her words would extend beyond the page.

Colleen Fisher Tully experienced first-hand the power of Kats' words. The two were classmates at Centennial College studying journalism and working on the East York Observer together. Fisher Tully recalls that she used to have a bad habit of making disparaging remarks

about herself. She didn't even notice most of the time. Early in the semester when they didn't know each other very well, Kats caught Fisher Tully making such a remark. Kats approached, looking straight at her.

"Why do you do that to yourself?" she asked. "You're beautiful."

Fisher Tully said the look Kats gave her went right into her soul and healed her.

"I haven't made such a remark since," she said. "That was Jewel. She had no time for negativity. There was no reason for it."

Kats was the recipient of many awards and honours during her lifetime. During the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto, she was asked to be a flag bearer.

"She was in a tremendous amount of pain that day," Katyal recalls. "I told her 'hang (on). This is your dream.'"

Kats did, and was so excited to have been chosen.

Recently, Kats was named by Conversations magazine as one of the Top 25 Women Changing the World.

Editor-in-chief Cyrus Webb said he chose Kats because of the example she set for everyone. Kats was someone who worked to erase boundaries and not use excuses. She got the most out of life, he said.

"She never let her disability define her," Webb said. "She impacted people just by the way she lived."

Even though Kats leaves behind an impressive body of work, for those closest to her, she will be remembered for her confidence and her passion for working with children. She wanted every girl with a disability to know that she is a princess with a story that is worth being told.

Those wishing to honour Kats' memory with a donation are asked to contribute to the Hospital for Sick Children at [my.sickkidsdonations.com/jewelkats](http://my.sickkidsdonations.com/jewelkats)

■ JEWEL KATS



■ HOCKEY

## Former Leaf shares shinny memories

By ANDREW WRIGHT  
The Observer

Although his days as a scrappy winger with the Leafs are over, Darcy Tucker's love for the game of hockey is unwavering.

On Jan. 11, Tucker laced up his skates for a hockey clinic with students from local elementary schools at Dieppe Park's outdoor rink in East York.

"I was like a big kid out there," he said.



The brisk weather was still a far cry from the deep-freeze that Tucker was accustomed to, growing up in Alberta.

Illuminated by the headlights of his parent's cars, Tucker and his brother would play on the pond in his backyard late into the night.

■ TUCKER "Usually it was pretty darn cold out there," Tucker explained. "Our feet were frozen, our hands were frozen, but we just enjoyed and loved the game."

At age 40, his relationship with the game hasn't really changed. Insulated by his love for the sport, the ice is still where he feels at home. The clinic wasn't just a PR opportunity. He fought over loose pucks, he chirped the youngsters and he even took a few shots on the goalies (although he said they were "flicks" rather than shots).

Aside from the fun, Darcy Tucker spoke about what he hoped to instil in the kids. It was the same thing he brought to the NHL. A grittiness.

"The willingness to do whatever it takes," Tucker said.



Andrew Wright // The Observer

Darcy Tucker takes a few "flicks" at some young net-minders during a Jan. 11 hockey clinic at Dieppe Park in East York. "I was like a big kid out there," he said.



EDITORIALS

# Arms wide open

While it may not be the burning issue that it was around election-time, the arrival of Syrian refugees is still a controversial topic for Canadians, including East Yorkers. But, thankfully, what we see is warmheartedness among people across Toronto, and the rest of the country.

There has been some concern that we're compromising Canadian domestic security by letting in thousands of people who might include a handful who wish us harm. There was a petition started by a 'netizen' in Alberta to extend the period of Syrian refugee arrivals, out of fear of terrorism. It's not an entirely irrational belief, considering some dreadful European examples of terrorism (and even just some very bad behaviour, like the rampaging of new arrivals in the German city of Cologne on New Year's Eve).

But fortunately, most East Yorkers and other Canadians aren't buying into any xenophobia. Mainly, what Canadians have been doing is helping. In November, East Yorkers held a 'sleep-out' to raise money for Syrian refugees. And just last week, HOME (Housing Opportunities and Marketplace Exchange) was launched — to provide a new service to help Syrian refugees on shelter issues. HOME is an online portal launched by WoodGreen Community Services, an umbrella social service agency located along East York's southern boundary that's also a part of the City of Toronto's Refugee Resettlement Program.

Let's stay on this welcoming path. Canadians really need not fear newcomers to Canada. With the reasonable measures that are in place, ensuring things like health and security clearances, there isn't any reason to be afraid of these people. It does appear that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his government have taken adequate steps to make sure that Canadians will remain safe with these arrivals and that Canada will ultimately prosper with our new neighbours' contributions to this country's economic, political and social life.

There's an old saying: What goes around comes around. East Yorkers have opened their arms to Syrian refugees and are helping them settle down in Canada. That investment is going to pay dividends.

~ Zilun Zhao

# Boycott the Oscars

It's the second consecutive year of the #OscarsSoWhite campaign, and people aren't just angry, they're tired

African-American community leaders are boycotting the 2016 Academy Awards, so in a sign of solidarity, respectable audiences should follow suit.

No non-white people were nominated in major categories for their excellent performances in the film industry, even with clear choices like Will Smith in *Concussion*; Ryan Coogler's direction in *Creed*; *Beasts of No Nation*; and of course, *Straight Outta Compton*.

On Jan. 18, Smith's wife, Jada Pinkett-Smith, said in an online video that she won't be attending the Oscars. She said it's time for the African-American community to rely on themselves, not the Academy, to recognize their accomplishments in the industry.

Commenting on the controversy, Sir Michael Caine told *Cinema Blend* that the nominations aren't decided on the actor's/actress's race.

"You can't vote for an actor because he's black," said Caine. "You have to give a good performance."

Actors Donnie Wahlberg and Keifer Sutherland agree. The two appeared on 92.5 FM, on the *Roz and Mocha Show*, saying 10-15 years from now the nominations will become more diverse. This same progress was promised 10 to 15 years ago. It's late.

In some respects, these men are right; this isn't entirely the Academy's fault. According to the *Economist*, the awards show is just one layer of prejudice against people of colour in the entertainment industry.

"The whitewashing occurs not [only] behind the closed doors of the Academy, but in drama schools and casting offices," said the magazine in an expose on how racially biased the awards are.

The president for the Academy Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Cheryl Boone Isaacs, and Academy CEO, Dawn Hudson, told the *Hollywood Reporter* of their shared sentiment for increased inclusion in film.

The Academy continues to work on the "much-needed diversity in [the] 2016 class and beyond," said Isaacs.

The Oscars have a responsibility, then, to attack the bias against coloured people in the entire film industry, supporting organizations that provide equal opportunities to diverse people in cinema.

Until that happens, Jada is right; it's time to fuel resources into events and communities that recognize the astounding accomplishments of people of colour.

It's time for equal celebration of talent and watching the Academy Awards won't push that agenda.

~ Kaitlyn Smith

COLUMNS

# Pay your dues, E.Y.

The influx of Syrian refugees is straining immigrant and other social services in Toronto and the rest of the country, but we can be part of the solution.

It's one thing for Immigration Minister John McCallum to speak about the generosity of Canadians and our open arms; it's another to actually address the pressure being felt in the sectors that provide newcomer services like health care and housing.

Last week, McCallum at least acknowledged the pleas from people working in these areas to slow down the flow of refugees.

A health care service provider spoke to me about this — saying that workers are stressed racing to keep up with the health needs of new and imminent arrivals, while dealing with already existing queues.

She said she wishes that officials had taken more time to bring new refugees in. Recent immigrants are having a hard enough time getting

access to services.

This isn't an uncommon sentiment.

Some unqualifiedly hailed the Liberal government's initial — but later-abandoned — plan to have 10,000 new Syrian refugees in Canada by the end of 2015. Others supported the plan, but with qualifications, like caution around accommodation and associated needs.

The varying opinions all had their validity, but to at least some extent, they're all now moot as well.

Thousands of Syrian refugees are here and more are coming. They're joining recent refugees and immigrants from other countries, making their home in Canada.

It's up to East Yorkers, Toronto-

nians and Canadians nationwide to help out where we can.

Groups like the East Toronto Families for Syria have taken action by spearheading a "pop-up" shop east of Danforth and Coxwell that helps provide new families with donated household goods. And people are still needed to volunteer for family sponsorships.

Stepping up can be relatively easy, like gathering some unused winter clothing and donating it for new arrivals.

Or it can be more onerous, like sponsorship.

But 'from each according to our abilities,' let's try to do what we can: donate, sponsor, volunteer — or just be a bit more patient and channel the old spirit of Toronto the Good.

We've done it before, and we can do it again.



Raquel Russell

# Politics for politicians

Politics can be really dull.

However, when you read comments like 'Ban all Muslims,' or 'Let's deport all illegal aliens,' how can you flip that page?

Donald Trump is known for his ferocious remarks, and it seems some of our politicians could be adapting the Trump model.

Well-known businessman and broadcaster Kevin O'Leary isn't calling for bans or deportations, but there are parallels with The Donald.

O'Leary has been pleading with Alberta's premier, Rachel Notley, to resign "for the sake of Canadians" — offering \$1 million to the oil industry if Notley steps down.

This sounds like doing business, and that's an attractive approach to some voters. But govern-

ments don't belong to the private sector. The prime minister doesn't fire, hire or promote Canadians outside his circle.

Still, there's an ethos among some that business people will make good politicians, and Trump and O'Leary are trying to capitalize on that.

But businesses and governments are not the same. The former doesn't necessarily prepare one for the latter.

In fact, a "business destroys values," said political handler Allan Bonner: "I don't buy for a minute that business skills can transfer into political skills."

So why are these wealthy businessmen getting involved in the political game?

They are not going in for the money, but for the challenge. Later

in their career, people such as O'Leary run out of things to conquer, and politics is just one more thing — another notch in the belt, another kick at the can.

O'Leary has been successful in commerce and broadcasting, so this just seems like another way to achieve acclaim.

This doesn't mean that Canadian politics can't benefit from publicity-minded people. Many successful politicians have worked their way into office through public advocacy or media coverage or just being somehow well-known.

A positive aspect of O'Leary's political feelers is that the publicity he's garnering is helping to spice up the Conservative party and the Canadian political landscape.

But let's be clear: People like Trump and O'Leary need to understand that government isn't just a toy for them to play with.

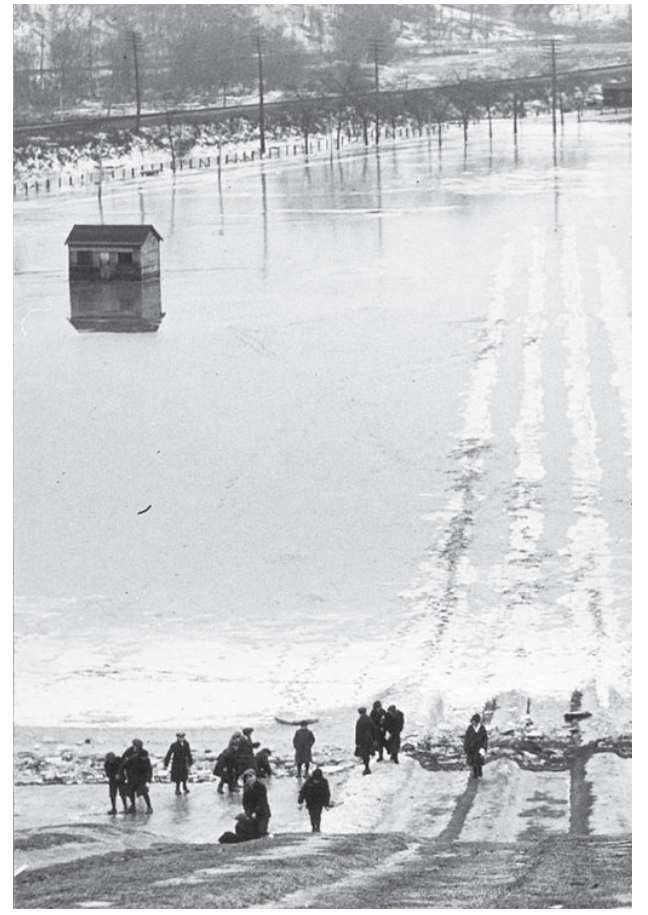
Public policy isn't for tinkerers. So when people say let's run a government like a business, let's not.



Evangelos Sipsas



# Looking back on East York of old



Courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

The Observer resumes its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. The vintage of these two pictures straddles the century-old mark — and they portray slices of life at this season of the year along the southern edge of the community. Above is a ‘class photo’ taken on Feb. 11, 1929 at the “Danforth Day Nursery,” 363 Main St., just north of Danforth. Lost to local history are the names of the children and the staff. At right is a photo that city archivists have dated as “circa 1912.” It depicts the flooding of what were then toboggan runs at Riverdale Park, just outside East York’s southwest corner.

## Eh? Did you say something about hearing loss?

By ANUSSA NITHIYANANTHAN  
The Observer

The Canadian Hearing Society will begin local hearing loss screening clinics in February, in partnership with the Mosaic Home Care Centre.

The first clinic is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 24, in Suite 215H at 1929 Bayview Ave. That’s the CNIB Centre, where Mosaic is also based.

In advance of the upcoming screenings, the Hearing Society hosted its first “Understanding Your Hearing” presentation at the Mosaic Centre headquarters last month. Mosaic is a nursing and home care agency covering Toronto and York Region; it shares office space with the CNIB, an organization serving vision-impaired people across Canada.

The idea for the December event came when Jane Teasdale, principal of the Mosaic Centre, spoke with the Canadian Hearing Society, based on Spadina Road, about how it could

help those in the East York area who want to learn more about hearing loss.

Audiologist Maria Michaelides spoke at the event.

“Forty per cent of seniors over the age of 60 have hearing loss, and every decade after, the prevalence continues to increase significantly,” she said. “Early intervention is best, especially if you have any concerns with your hearing.”

The presentation covered the various causes of hearing loss — and its symptoms. Those include tinnitus (ringing) in one or both ears; asking to repeat things frequently; using one particular ear while

using the telephone; and difficulty hearing close conversation in situations involving considerable background sound.

The three types of hearing loss are conductive loss, sensorineural and mixed hearing. Conductive loss is caused by impairment of the outer ear, ear canal or eardrum.

Sensorineural effects are sensitive to loud noises, trauma, or hearing loss running in the family. Mixed hearing loss is a combina-

tion of both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss.

But some effective technologies have been developed to help the hearing impaired. Jo-Ann Bentley is the director of the communications devices program at the Canadian Hearing Society. She said that, for instance, some hearing aids can be helpful in the case of an emergency in one’s own home.

“Imagine the smoke alarm ringing in the night. Are you sure you will hear the alarm?” she asked. With new products, she added, you can.

“If the smoke alarm is activated, a loud, low-frequency sound is emitted and a pillow shaker will vibrate to alert someone to the danger of smoke,” she said.

The Feb. 24 hearing screening will run from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. It’s free, and refreshments will be provided. The venue, on Bayview north of Eglinton, is close to public transit, but there is also paid parking on-site. For further information, call 416-322-7002.

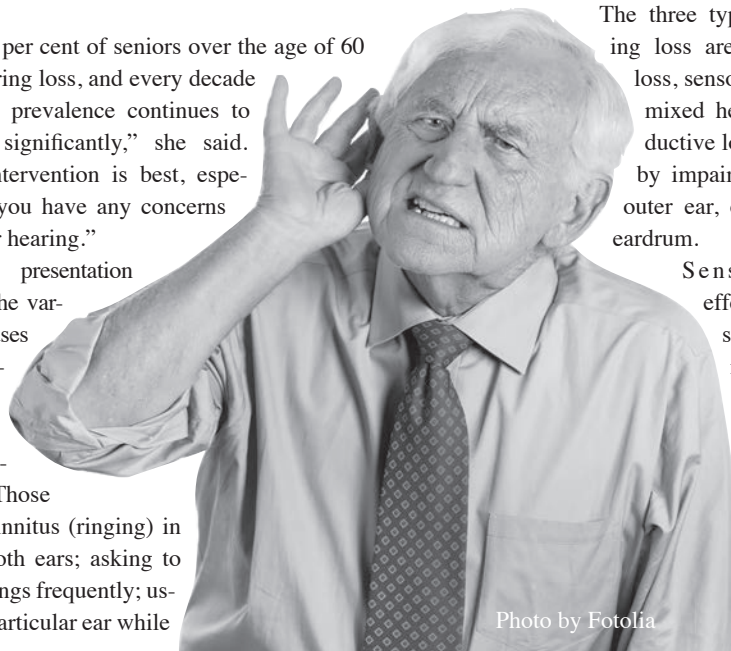


Photo by Fotolia

## Toronto police sergeant shares expertise on disaster

By NATHAN VAZ  
The Observer

Eric Goodwin knows how to deal with disasters.

In 2013, while serving as a police officer with the European Union Police, he trained Afghan law enforcement personnel in Kabul, Afghanistan, specializing in emergency management.

“I was responsible for teaching and putting together the first-ever course in incident command for the Afghan National Police,” he said.

Goodwin explained that he led tabletop exercises focusing on the com-

mand and control of a site affected by natural or human-induced disasters.

“Tabletop exercises are designed to bring people (into) a safe environment (to) practise the hierarchical structure (in emergency situations). You provide the students with something they can handle and give them a step-by-step process... to control a particular scene,” he said. “I’m focusing on women ... to empower (them) through education.”

When Goodwin completed his tour of duty in Afghanistan and returned to Canada, he realized there was a large South Asian population living in East

York; these new immigrants were unaware of, and unprepared for, the potential dangers, such as power outages affecting thousands of homes in their high population density community.

Currently a Toronto Police sergeant and undergraduate student at Cape Breton University, Goodwin hopes to use his experience in Afghanistan to help his neighbours in East York. During the Tuesday sessions, co-sponsored by the Canadian Red Cross, he gave the women kits containing pamphlets of emergency scenarios, a log-book, and a flashlight that would help them during power outages.

“The women here have the cognitive ability to take action. They just don’t have the knowledge to carry out certain activities,” he said. “We don’t want to create a dependency. We want to give them education, so that when they have to make a decision, it’s an informed decision.”

Pete Karageorgos, the director of consumer and industry relations at the Insurance Bureau of Canada, attended Goodwin’s demonstration.

He said that preparing new immigrants for the worst can help relieve some of the financial strains on municipal services and resources.

“The December ice storm in 2013 cost insurance companies almost \$200 million in claims. These claim damages would’ve included additional living expenses, clean up costs, cost to replace items, and cost to rebuild things,” he said.

As the Canadian government continues to process Syrian refugees, 15,000 more by March 1, Goodwin stresses that the responsibility of being prepared in an emergency falls to all Canadians, especially those in high-risk areas.

“To me, the work is never over,” he said.



# No welcome mat here for bed bugs

Property manager has one goal — to keep bed bugs from coming in the door

By SCOTT DELL  
The Observer

It's a scene right out of a 1950s horror movie. The neighbourhood is overrun with giant insects and it's up to one person to stop the infesting horde.

The neighbourhood can be found in East York, the giant insects are really bed bugs and the ever-vigilant guardian is Rose Sekaric, property manager at an apartment building at 80 Cosburn Ave.

Sekaric, who emigrated from Serbia in 1999, is proud to say the building has never had bed bugs.

"Never in the building. I keep it nice and clean and will continue to do that," she said.

In 2015, Toronto had 1,415 reported cases of bed bugs, according to Tracy Leach of Toronto Public Health. Some of those cases occurred in East York.

Mary Fragedakis, councillor for Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth, says she has helped several tenants in the Pape Village area with bed bug issues.

"I often go on inspections of apartment buildings with city staff and that gives me a chance to connect with residents about issues like this," she said.

Sekaric's 16-storey building is one of few that remain free of the nighttime nuisance.

But what are bed bugs? Pest controller Carlo Panacci of Cain Pest Control, which serves East York, defines them simply as "a bug that feeds on human blood."

They're oval-shaped and hide in tight spaces such as underneath sideboards or in the crevasses of a bed, he added. They usually bite at night because the victim is still, but can strike any time one is at rest.



Jacqueline Thetsombandith /// Observer

**Rose Sekaric, property manager at an apartment building on Cosburn Avenue, proudly shows off the lack of bed bugs in her mattresses. "You don't find a mouse, you don't find a cockroach, you don't find bedbugs, you don't find flies," she says of her building.**

So what is Sekaric's secret?

"I clean the tiles, I clean the walls and I clean the washroom," she said.

And while cleaning can help prevent the problem, it's key even if you have bed bugs, Panacci said. It's a great help when residents are "doing all that they can do to eradicate the problem."

A rumour once circulated through Sekaric's building that the property manager likes to check every piece of furniture that comes in. When asked about this practice, her eyes light up and she says, "Yes!"

"It's also important not to touch (any furniture left) in the street. If it's in the street it's there for a rea-

son and the reason is bedbugs, cockroaches or mice," she said. "If you buy furniture from the store...it's fine. But if you bring in dresser from outside, I like to check."

She notes that one person collecting a piece of furniture on the sidewalk can quickly lead to the infestation of the entire building.

Sekaric is so dedicated to maintaining a bed bug-free zone that she will help tenants who cannot buy new furniture.

"If you need money, I will give you the money to buy furniture and you can pay me back slowly," she said. "Just don't take furniture from the street."

Despite the fact that the building is infestation-free, Sekaric brings in a pest controller to inspect it every month.

She pulls a stack of reports out of a desk and begins counting back the months that the building has been bug-free. "October, September, August," all the way back to January 2015.

"I give my best. I give a hundred per cent. My tenants deserve that and my tenants are happy," Sekaric said.

It's true, says Keith Rogers Tupper, a tenant of 80 Cosburn for three years.

"She's always sweeping, cleaning," he said. "I think the apartment

building itself is immaculate because of her work. I've never worried about bed bugs."

Even the garbage room is free of unwanted critters.

"You don't find a mouse, you don't find a cockroach, you don't find bedbugs, you don't find flies," Sekaric says.

It's clear she takes great pride in her building and her tenants.

"I love my job. I am 100-per-cent sure that you know that I love my job," she said.

Meanwhile, Ward 29 residents who *do* have problems with bed bugs should contact Fragedakis at councillor\_fragedakis@toronto.ca.

## Affordable housing, job skills on MP's agenda

East York residents discuss priorities for federal budget at public meeting

By KAITLYN SMITH  
The Observer

Some Toronto-Danforth residents think Ottawa is too shortsighted when it comes to government spending — and at Liberal MP Julie Dabrusin's town hall meeting on Jan. 16, they told her so.

In an effort to canvass Canadians' input, the Liberal government

has urged MPs to hold public meetings to discuss the 2016 federal budget.

Dabrusin, the new representative for Toronto-Danforth, held such a meeting at Monarch Park Collegiate, and attendees shared the programs and initiatives that they'd like to see the Trudeau government investing in.

In groups, residents outlined their top three priorities for federal spending and presented them to Dabrusin and her team.

The findings were compiled for a letter that was scheduled to be sent to Finance Minister Bill Morneau on Jan. 22. That letter, along with others from constituencies across the country, will be shared online.



■ DABRUSIN

In her opening statement, Dabrusin addressed six categories that were to focus the group discussions, stemming from what the Liberals promised to fund during

the election campaign. They include social infrastructure, physical infrastructure and climate change, job skills and business growth and innovation.

Recurring items such as creating and maintaining affordable housing, sustainable food systems and supporting urban/local agriculture popped up among several of the groups that were established at the meeting — as well as funding to invest in small businesses and mending relationships with Native communities.

The meeting was kept polite, but it was lively at times, especially as some residents voiced their view that government spending provides mere stopgap measures to tempo-

rarily mitigate problems.

One group decided to take a step back in their discussion and focus on the system of federal spending as a whole.

They presented what they said is the need for long-term goal-setting, and the collaboration of the federal government with municipalities and the provinces.

One of the attending city councillors, Toronto-Danforth's Mary Fragedakis, said these issues "are the kinds of things we deal with on a daily basis at city hall."

"Without the federal government working with municipalities and us working with the province, we're not going (to) get anywhere," she added.