

A Place To Call Home



IAN MCINROY PHOTO

A ribbon cutting last Friday celebrated the opening of the sales office for the new Alcona by the Lake subdivision by Country Homes, located on Innisfil Beach Road. From left to right are: Helen Read, sales consultant, developers Les Black and Ian Black, Elem Rinomato, of Country Homes, Tony Rinomato Jr., vice-president of Country Homes, Innisfil Councillors Bill Pring, Rod Boynton and Peter Kmet, Mayor Brian Jackson, Deputy-Mayor Gord Wauchope, lawyer for Country Homes Marvin Geist, Country Homes president Ernie Rinomato, and sale consultant Lea Karr.

Board eyes French immersion expansion

BY KELLY MCSHANE

Extended French programs may be getting a boost at Goodfellow Public School this September, but finding qualified teachers who want to teach the language may be the board's biggest obstacle.

"We don't have a shortage of qualified French teachers in Simcoe County. They are just choosing not to teach French," said Gordon Campbell, director of education for the Simcoe County District School Board, at a recent school services standing committee meeting.

The committee would like to see an expansion of the Grade 6 EFSL program at Goodfellow, and an additional Grade 6/7 class at Warnica in Barrie.

"The more we can enhance our program, the more teachers will come forward. We hope to both recruit new teachers and keep the French teachers that we have," said Lindy Zaretsky, superintendent of instructional services.

The board is currently looking at all teachers in the province to determine how many of them actually have the qualifications to teach French, and, secondly, why they may not be choosing to teach it now.

Zaretsky said many teachers may choose not to teach French because they often don't feel valued as a litera-

cy teacher. She says the key is to get students interested in the programs by making sure they understand the benefits of learning a second language.

"As students become engaged, parents start to value French more. We are still a bilingual country after all," Zaretsky said.

Innisfil trustee Donna Armstrong would like to see the addition of separate French immersion schools across the county to accommodate interested students.

"I do get many calls from people moving into the area who are looking for French immersion schools. If we are a progressive board, why aren't we progressive in this area?" Armstrong said.

Zaretsky said that trend data shows children aged seven to nine lose interest in French and enrolment drops.

"First we need to re-ignite the interest in core French programs. We still have a lot to do with core and immersion French. A separate immersion school would be premature," said Zaretsky.

There are 987 elementary students enrolled in the EFSL program. In 2008-2009, the board has projected an increase to 1,039 students. A final decision will be made at the next board meeting scheduled for March 26.

Company trains locals

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There are a few television channels but very few people have a TV anyway. In fact, very few in the city and towns, and none in the rural areas, have electricity.

Willoughby was in Burkina Faso last October to visit the company's properties and to review exploration plans and also to attend the opening of a new mine called Taparko.

It was started by Goldrush Resources' partner there, High River Gold.

"The Taparko mine brought electricity to a region where it didn't previously exist and also created a water reservoir that the local people can draw from, a huge side benefit of min-

ing operations," he said.

Roads are almost exclusively dirt except for a few main highways, which are two-lane roads.

Willoughby said over the last few years, Goldrush Resources has trained and educated about 30 geologists (really geological technologists, as few have degrees), plus office workers and drivers.

"Their income is far above the norm so they are very much looked up to by the rest of the population," he said.

Willoughby will be back in Africa again next October to meet the NetTV film crew who produced the half hour film that can be found on the company's website, in order to update the film.

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