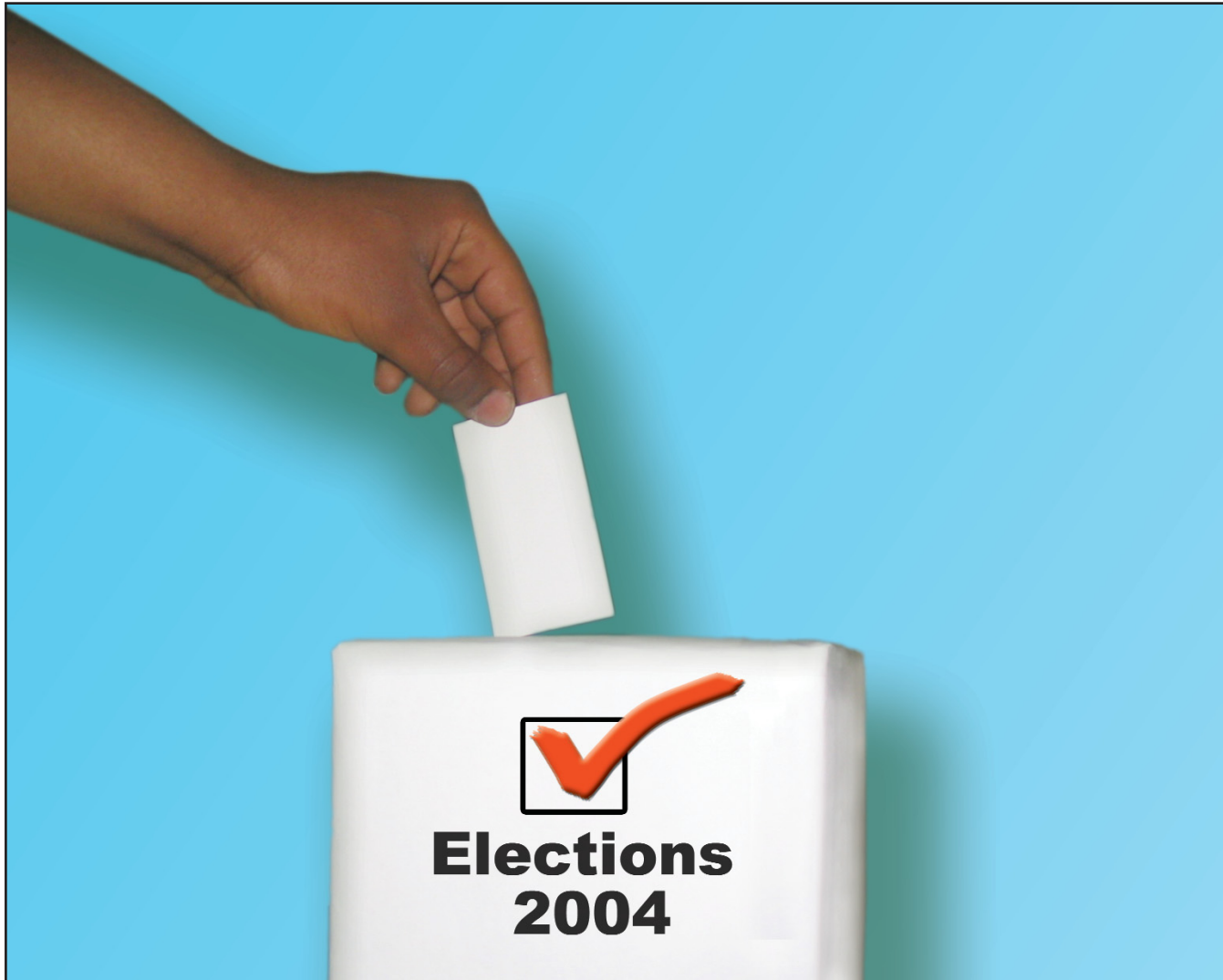


# Regent Park Votes



## Youth Voting: The Facts

**C**anadians head to the polls on June 28 for the federal election but, judging by statistics, Canada's youth won't be there.

Overall voter turnout is plummeting and participation of those aged 18-24 continues to fall from a sad 38.2 per cent in 1993, to 27.7 per cent in 1997, to a pathetic 22.4 per cent in 2000. That works out to be about four out of five youth who don't vote.

What's more, a poll commissioned by CanWest News Service found that nearly half of survey participants aged 14-18 couldn't name a single important issue in the federal election. It's clear, politicians aren't reaching the youth.

Considering that the youth vote is an untapped resource for politicians, one would think that party leaders would focus much of their energy on trying to win over young voters and actually, they should do this if they want to do well in the election.

But it seems that none of the parties have what it takes to make young people want to vote. According to a study commissioned by Elections Canada, low youth voter turnout is blamed on "low levels of political interest and knowledge; a declining sense that voting is a civic duty; certain personal and administrative factors (e.g. too busy, voter registration difficulty), and lack of contact with political parties."

Youth would add a few more reasons to this list. Not only are they not interested in politics, but youth feel that politicians are pushing issues that aren't important to young people. For instance, the primary issue for the party leaders is health care. For youth who are in the prime of their life and who are healthy, health care is not as important as other issues such as education, the rising cost of tuition and public transportation, youth employment, insurance rates for young drivers, affordable housing and globalization. Other reasons why youth don't vote are because they don't believe in the political system and they think that their vote won't make a difference, their voice won't be heard and they will have no influence in the political realm.

*Continued on p.7...*

Federal elections coming up on June 28, check out party platforms on p.6...



**Coca-Cola kills:  
find out how  
Page 4**



**How to talk to your  
kids about sex  
Page 8**



**Face Off:  
Music downloading  
Page 10**



## POET'S CORNER

### They Say

*They say I'm less than average  
They say I can't succeed  
Because I live in Regent Park  
They say there's just no need  
But I don't get caught up  
I don't really care  
But it's hard to make it to a place  
When you know,  
no one wants you there  
They say I'm just the G.H.E.T.T.O.  
They say I have no future  
Because I live in Regent Park  
They say I should not bother  
But I try to stay strong  
And follow directions  
Because you never get a second chance  
To make a first impression  
They think I'm less than average  
They think I can't succeed  
Because I live in Regent Park  
They think there's just no need  
But there's someone in the crowd  
And in me they do believe  
That I can be what I want  
And someday I can achieve  
But others can say what they want  
They can say what I can't be  
But their making a mistake  
Because I'm R.P.'s Destiny.*

*Zeinab Mohamed, 13,  
Nelson Mandela Park Public School*

## LET CATCH DA FLAVA BE YOUR VOICE

*Catch da Flava* is a student and community youth newspaper that is published a minimum of four times a year. The newspaper is distributed FREE to schools, libraries and community groups across downtown Toronto.

The newspaper is produced by the *Catch da Flava* youth editorial committee of the Regent Park Focus.

*Catch da Flava* welcomes letters and submissions from young people (up to age 24). Submissions should be no longer than 500 words in length. If you would like more information about how you can contribute to *Catch da Flava*, call us at (416) 863-1074.

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SUBMISSIONS IS:  
Aug. 16, 2004  
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*Catch da Flava* reserves the right to edit submitted articles for space and clarification.

**Published Since 1995**

# Guest Editorial



**B**y the time a student has reached the legal age to vote, which is 18, you would imagine that they would have already developed an interest in what happens in the political world. After all, politics is all around us and governs almost everything we do. Unfortunately, many students are not interested in politics and are choosing not to vote in the upcoming federal elections.

I think that they are ignorant and irresponsible to do so. I believe it's important for students to express their opinions by voting. How else will politicians listen to what youth have to say? A lot of students who are choosing not to vote say that the political parties don't represent them. Yet these same students don't make the effort to find out what each political party believes in, or can even name the leaders. Nor do these students realize that there are almost 15 different political parties to choose from.

I must admit I didn't always feel this way. There was a time when I wasn't interested in following the news, reading newspapers and staying up-to-date about political parties and issues. Politics, I felt, was something that only adults were interested in. But that was before my civics course. civics is a course that is taught in Grade 10 to help students understand the role of government and politics in our lives. In the course, we discussed issues such as the deficit and how reduced taxes impact the ability of the government to provide social services, education and health care.

After taking the civics course I realized the importance of learning about the different political parties and leaders, and finding out where they stand on the issues I care about.

I'm glad I have had an opportunity to participate in the civics course. It was a truly eye-opening experience and has led me to believe that civics should be mandatory for all students. This way, if a student chooses not to vote, at least they will do so from a position of knowledge and understanding and not from a position of irresponsibility, ignorance and immaturity.

*da Flava's Crystal Fung, 16,  
Jarvis Collegiate*



VOLUME 9 ISSUE 2  
SPRING 2004

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Regent Park Focus  
600 Dundas St. East  
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# Duane Robotham's Killer Walks Free



**D**uane Richard Robotham was a son, a brother, a star football player at Central Technical High School and a well-liked member of the Regent Park community. But on April 17, 1998, the 18-year-old NHL hopeful died when he got involved in a brawl at the bustling corner of Yonge Street and Dundas Street East. Six years later, his admitted killer walks free.

What had led to this fatal fight and why was his killer released? On April 17, 1998, Robotham and two of his

friends, Nautyn McKay-Loescher and Andre Taylor went to the Eaton Centre. While at the mall, Robotham got into altercation with an 18-year-old Florida resident named Fabian Reid-Thomas. According to an eye-witness, the altercation was triggered by a "shoulder bump." During the scuffle, Reid-Thomas wound up getting two of his teeth knocked out and was nearly thrown off the Eaton's Centre balcony by Robotham. Unfortunately, this was the violent prelude that ultimately led to Robotham's death.

The battle resumed later that afternoon on the streets, just outside the Eaton Centre. A witness claimed that Reid-Thomas retaliated against his aggressors by stabbing Robotham several times in the back and shoulder. Robotham died from his wounds.

Reid-Thomas fled to Florida after the incident. A month later, he was arrested and spent just over three-and-a-half-years in jail for an unrelated robbery and carjacking that he had committed

when he was 15-years-old. Afterwards, he was voluntarily extradited to Canada on an immigration warrant. He spent about two-and-a-half years in a Toronto jail awaiting his trial.

During the Robotham trial, Reid-Thomas alleged that he had acted in self-defense. Although Duane was unarmed and at the time didn't represent an immediate threat, the jury apparently agreed. In March, Reid-Thomas was acquitted of the charge of second-degree murder. This was the second trial in the Robotham death. The first trial ended in a mistrial when the jury couldn't reach a unanimous verdict.

Duane's murder reminds us that youth violence is still prevalent and that we are far from eliminating the number of unnecessary deaths resulting from petty quarrels.

It's up to parents and leaders in the community to teach peaceful conflict resolution techniques to children. By

doing so, it can only be hoped that our youth of tomorrow do not learn to use aggression as a tool to earn respect or solve problems.



*da Flava's Bo Wen Chan, 20, University of Toronto*

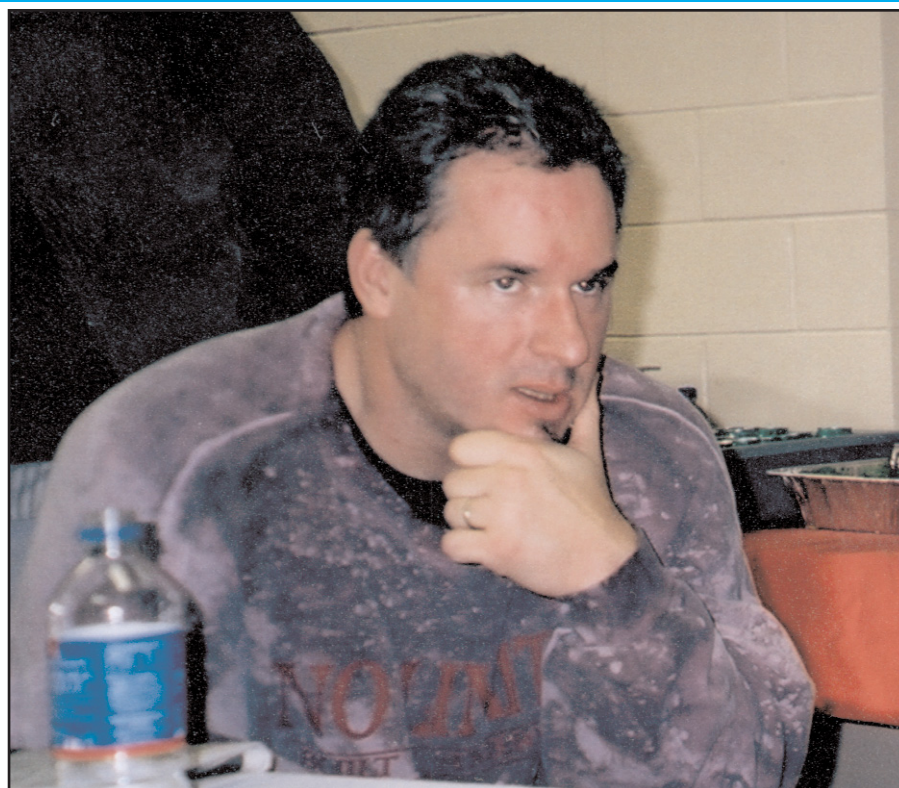
*Our sincere condolences go out to the family of Michael Tarcea, 27, who was fatally shot in the head on May 21. His body was found on the northeast steps of 540 Dundas St. E. A memorial was held on Sat. May 29 at the Regent Park Community Centre. If you have any information about this crime, contact Sgt. Brian Preston at: 416-808-5516.*

# Popular Regent Park Community Officer Faces Charges

**M**any members of the Regent Park community were disappointed to learn that Constable Mike McCormack was one of four officers named in an internal police investigation of corruption in the police force. McCormack was charged with corrupt practice, two counts of discreditable conduct and insubordination. Police Chief Julian Fantino announced the charges at a press conference held in April.

"I don't know if he deserves that kind of punishment," said Regent Park youth resident Nurieny Mohammed. "I know him personally and he is not that kind of man."

Mohammed is not the only youth that feels shocked about the charges. Prior to taking a position with the police union earlier in the year, McCormack worked hard in the Regent Park community to build positive links between youth and 51 Division police, even going so far as to take personal time to initiate a police-youth basketball league. Many community members believed that McCormack's effort was paying off as many youth began looking up to him as someone they could talk to about their problems with the law. McCormack left 51 Division in December 2003 to take a position as a director of the police association and the community honored him with a farewell party.



*Constable Mike McCormack*

"I couldn't believe it when I heard it," says Donnie Williams, a coordinator at the Regent Park Recreation Centre. "McCormack goes out of his way to help people that need help. He is not a criminal."

The charges stem from McCormack's association with Jeff Geller, a con-

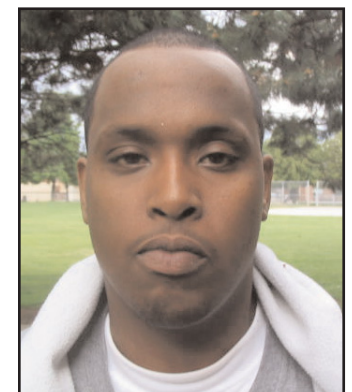
victed car thief who had ties to organized crime. Geller died of a drug overdose in March. It is alleged that McCormack used his influence as a police officer to try to help Geller get his revoked car dealership license reinstated. Documents released by the Police allege that the dealership was part of a money laundering operation. Police also allege that Mike McCormack's wife, Elizabeth Martin, was a director of a

company that operated under the name, Jeff Geller's Exclusive Auto.

In addition to the charges, McCormack was forced to step down from his duties as a director with the Police Association pending the results of the charges. It is reported that he denies the charges and is anxious to defend himself in court.

Matthew Clip, is a youth who believes that Mike McCormack must have been set up.

"I am shocked but I know the truth will come out," says Clip.



*da Flava's Shakib Toukaleh, 19*



# Global Struggles Coca-Cola Kills

The Coca-Cola industry is clearly one of the most dominant and recognized soft drink manufacturers and distributors in the world, boasting sales in over 200 countries. Wherever you go and wherever you look, someone is drinking Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola products which include energy drinks, alcoholic beverages and bottled water, are definitely part of universal modern day culture.

We've all heard about the ways drinking Coke can affect your health for instance, it can rot your teeth. But Dario Esguerra from the Columbia Action Solidarity Alliance (C.A.S.A.) says that the problem with Coca-Cola goes beyond health factors.

What Esguerra is referring to is the human rights violations Coca-Cola has been involved with in countries like Columbia. In December 1996, Coca-Cola arranged for paramilitaries to enter Columbia's Bebidas y Alimentos (National Food and Beverage) bottling plant, which happens to be a company controlled by Coca-Cola. The paramilitary's mission was to stop union activities at this bottling plant. The forces ended up killing the union leader, Isidro Segundo Gil and forced employees to sign union resignation forms after receiving death threats targeting them and their families.



This all occurred because the National Food and Beverage Worker's Union (Sinal Trailnal) of Columbia accused Coca-Cola of working with right-wing paramilitaries to suppress union activities in their Colombian bottling plants. The Panamco plant in the city of Bucaramanga was another site of harassment. When union members went on a 120-hour strike to protest the loss of employee medical insurance, the plant's chief accused five union leaders of planti-

ng a bomb. Union leaders were imprisoned for six months until the regional prosecutor concluded that allegations were false.

Coca-Cola is also wreaking havoc in Plachimada, India. There, a Coca-Cola plant has been carelessly contaminating the water supply and depleting limited groundwater sources.

In April 2002, after local residents had taken notice of their discolored water, 2000 peaceful protesters descended upon the Coca-Cola plant demanding that it leave and compensate villages and farmers for the loss of their water. The company's response was to send a truckload of water to two villages everyday; an action that was both grossly inadequate and in the opinion of many protesters, an admission of guilt. Protesters spent 49 days standing outside the plant, police intervened and arrested 130 men and women. The demonstration continued until August when another 1000 people marched to the factory.

Coca-Cola claims to provide quality refreshing drinks to its consumers, all the while it has engaged in criminal activities in developing nations in the pursuit of maximizing profit margin. As long as we continue to purchase Coca-Cola products, people will suffer in both

Colombia and India. Pubs and bars in Ireland and some university campuses in the United States have joined in a global effort to take down Coca-Cola by boycotting its products. You can too.

Next time you chose to quench your thirst with a can of Coke, think about the human suffering behind the production of its products.

Some of the many Coca-Cola beverages to avoid are: A&W, Mello Yello, Barq's, Minute Maid, Bacardi Mixers, Nestle, Nescafe, Canada Dry, Nestea, PowerAde, Coke (diet, light, caffeine-free vanilla, cherry, lime), Dr. Pepper, Dannon, Dasani, Evian, Fanta, Five Alive, Fruitopia, Ice Mountain, Wink, Sprite, Sunkist and Tahiti Treat.



da Flava's Tyrone MacLean-Wilson, 19

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## Social Documentary Searching for Stories

Aysha Productions, an award-winning documentary production company in Toronto, wants to hear from youths with an immigration or refugee experience who are facing a big decision to make and are at a loss as to which way to go.

To discuss, please contact Theresa  
at: 416-598-4959 or 416-823-4609  
before the end of June 2004.  
[www.ayshaproductions.com](http://www.ayshaproductions.com)



# Global Struggles

## The End of the People's Movement in Haiti



Haiti's former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide

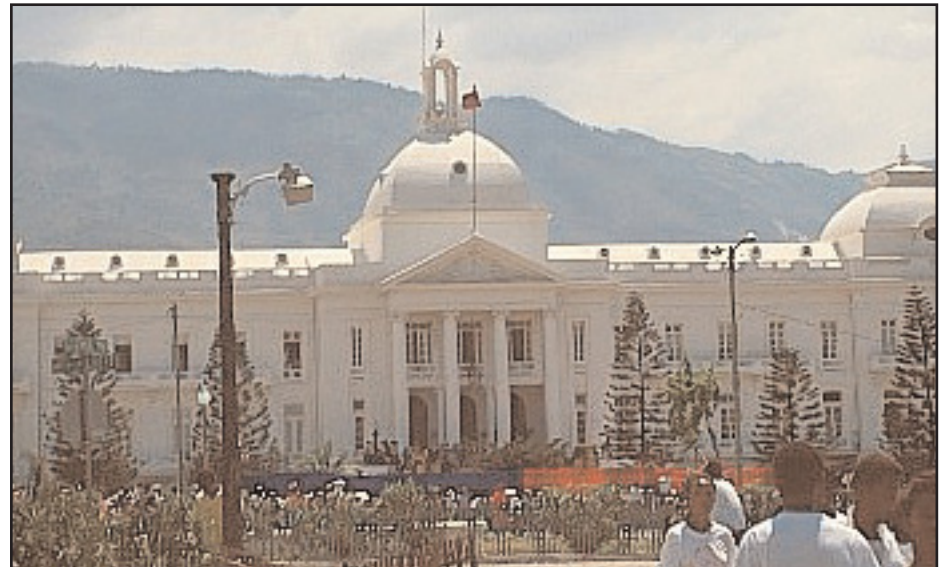
him from mobilizing the international community to provide military assistance. Why did the Americans abduct the President of Haiti?

As a Canadian with a Haitian background, I have always been interested in the politics of Haiti. Haiti is a small country bordering the Dominican Republic and is located in the Western Caribbean. The country has a population of 8.3 million people. Most Haitians speak Creole and their official language is French. Some of the reasons behind my family's decision to immigrate to Canada were to escape

hunger, disease and poverty. Haiti is the poorest country in

the Americas. It is because of this poverty that I first became interested in Aristide.

Before rising to presidency, Aristide was a Catholic priest who worked to improve the conditions of the poor in city slums. Undeterred by death squads that threatened his life, Aristide preached for justice and the rights of the poor and was unrelenting in his criticism of the business class and elite that ruled the country. By the time the American-supported Duvalier family dictatorship had fled the country,



Aristide had become Haiti's new symbol of liberation.

"When Duvalier was tearing Haiti apart in the 1970's, his death squads were brutal, ferocious, and unfair by abusing the people of Haiti," says Germaine Joseph, a Haitian-Canadian living in Toronto. "Aristide was the only courageous person who put himself in the line of fire to help the Haitians. He shortly took control and became the people's spokesperson. He protected the street kids, helped the suffering children, sent the youth to learn a career at school, and took good care of them."

On Dec. 16, 1990, the priest won 67 per cent of the vote in a field of 12 candidates vying for president. Right from the start, the American government led by George Bush Sr. disliked Aristide's "socialist"-like tendencies. Fearful that Haiti would follow the successful footsteps of Fidel Castro's Cuba and become another country for others to emulate, the United States was anxious to ensure that Aristide's popular movement would not succeed. Although the U.S. was not able to prevent Aristide's landslide victory, there was much that they could do to undermine him. The most effective method was to fund an opposition. It is widely acknowledged that the CIA and other right-wing U.S. groups helped create and fund a paramilitary group called FRAPH (Front

for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti). This group would carry out a successful military coup that would oust Aristide from power in September of 1991. During this coup, thousands of civilians were killed and hundreds of thousands fled to the Dominican Republic.

Fortunately for Aristide, a democratic government under leadership of Bill Clinton gained control of the White House and was sympathetic to Aristide's pleas. In October of 1994, with Clinton's support, Aristide became the first exiled president to return to office in Latin America. Unfortunately, seven weeks after Aristide's return, Republicans took control of the U.S. Congress and from that day forward worked not only to fund the opposition but to also block aid to the poverty stricken government of Haiti. This would prove to be a fatal blow to Aristide's attempt to transform the country.

The cuts to aid and the funneling of millions of dollars to the FRAPH opposition meant that there would be no money to rebuild schools, health care facilities, roads, ports, telecommunications, or airports. Furthermore, as Haiti had no army, it would only be a matter of time before American armed rebels and gangs would overwhelm the police force.

On Feb. 28, in the midst of trying to secure military assistance from neighbouring Caribbean nations, the U.S. intervened to remove Aristide from power. With friends like these who needs enemies?

*da Flava's Fénide Hérard, 21*



logon to [www.catchdaflava.com](http://www.catchdaflava.com)



# Youth Vote 2004

## A Brief Look at the Three Major Parties



**Liberal Leader:  
Paul Martin**

Health care remains the top priority for the Liberals.

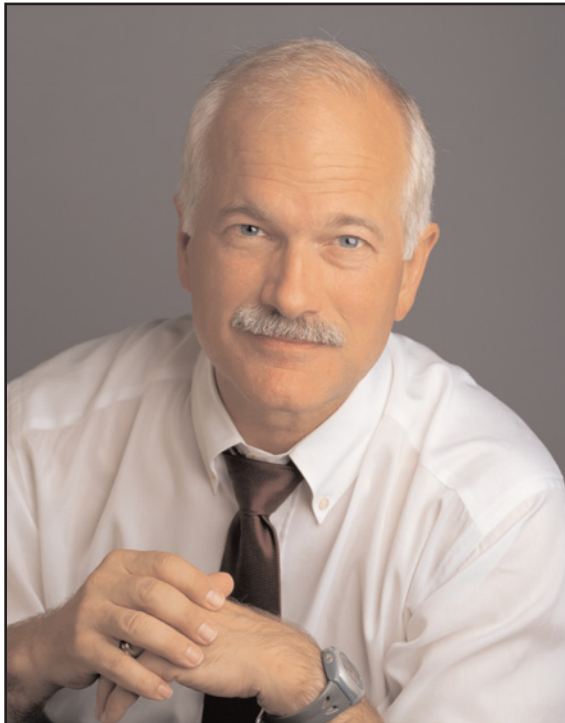
### **HEALTH CARE:**

- Promise a 10-year plan with a sustained boost in health transfers to the provinces.
- Demand new accountability measures from provinces, like published lists of waiting times for procedures.
- Support public funding for medically necessary care but have no policy against private-sector involvement in providing services.

### **SOCIAL:**

- Re-establish a national housing plan.
- Improve aboriginals' system of education and accountable government and ensure clean drinking water on native reserves.
- The Liberal government will contribute \$5 billion over the next five years to accelerate the building of a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care.
- Supports same-sex marriage.
- Martin vowed to invest in cities and stay out of deficit while maintaining social programs.

For the latest information about the Liberals, check out their Web site: [www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca).



**NDP Leader:  
Jack Layton**

"Positive choices" is what NDP Leader Jack Layton says his party is focusing on for the upcoming federal election.

### **HEALTH CARE:**

- Immediately re-establish federal funding at 25 per cent of medicare costs.
- Reverse private delivery services.
- Create national homecare and pharmacare programs and enforce national standards on access to care.

### **SOCIAL:**

- Re-establish a national housing plan.
- Cut tuition by 10 per cent. Student loans interest free.
- Create national transportation strategy to provide long-term funding and incentives to promote public transit.
- Cap credit-card interest rates to five points above prime rates.
- Complete support for same-sex marriage.

### **ECONOMY:**

- Tax increases would target the wealthiest Canadians in the form of rolling back the corporate tax cut introduced by the Liberals in January; introducing a tax on inheritance sums over \$1 million; and recovering the \$8.5 billion in tax dollars that is currently uncollected.
- Committed to balanced budgets and slow debt-reduction.
- Targeted tax cuts for low- and middle-income earners.
- Eliminate GST for essential goods.

### **DEFENCE:**

- Refuse to participate in proposed U.S. missile-defence program.

To learn more about the NDP visit: [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca).



**Conservative Leader:  
Stephen Harper**

The focus of the Conservative platform is tax cuts. The Conservatives promise an accountable government.

### **HEALTH CARE**

- Deliver new funding promised under the 2003 federal-provincial Health Accord.
- Support a new national drug plan to be negotiated with the provinces.
- Maintain the Canada Health Act's guarantee of public funding for necessary services.
- Favours private delivery of some medicare services.

### **ECONOMY**

- Twenty-five per cent tax cut for middle-income earners, with long-term goal of pulling Canadian tax rates lower than the U.S.
- Provide a tax deduction per child for families.

### **DEFENCE**

- Boost military funding by \$1.2 billion immediately and eventually increase that to \$2 billion.

For more information about the Conservatives, visit their Web site: [www.conservative.ca](http://www.conservative.ca).

# Youth Vote 2004

...continued from cover

So the issue is far from youth not caring to vote. The reality is that young people love to cast votes, as was evident in the Canadian Idol competition. Over 20.5 million people cast their votes for Canadian Idol, many of whom were in the 18-24 demographic. Probably more people of that age voted for Canadian Idol than in the last provincial or federal election. Does this mean that politicians have to sing, dance, perform and entertain youth to win their vote? No, but as old, shriveled white men competing with all the young good-looking pop idols and celebrities for the attention of young people, they have to come up with a strategy good enough to make young people want to vote.

Ignoring youth and not taking the time to reach out and speak about the issues that affect them is not a good start to an election. Making young people feel powerless by not including them in political campaigns and making them feel as if their voice doesn't count doesn't help either. A strategy good enough to win the youth vote begins with respect for young people and awareness of their social-economic and political concerns.



da Flava's Brandi Costain, 21

## Local Candidates



**Liberal**  
Bill Graham



**NDP**  
Michael Shapcott



**Conservative**  
Megan Harris

## Regent Park Youth Voices on Voting

"I won't vote for anyone because I don't trust any politicians. There all a bunch of liars and full of bullsh\*t, there is pure scandalism in politics. I'm not going to vote for no Liberals, no f\*cking nothing, no allies, nothing at all."

Nurieny Mohammed, 19



"I won't be involved with the election. I don't think much of it. I have no idea who the candidates are and I don't know anything about the them. They got their own problems. All you hear about is scandals."

Shuaib Yussuf, 19



"I would vote for Jack Layton because my mom knows him, and he cares about improving the environment. He's also about social security programs and stuff."

Matthew Brown, 20



"I would vote for Jack Layton because I believe he's true to his word. I know he wants to help stop the senseless war in Iraq and other candidates are not on the same page as Jack Layton."

Hassan Hussain, 20



**FEDERAL ALL-CANDIDATES MEETING**  
Regent Park Community Centre  
203 Sackville Green  
June 17 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.



# Ask da Sexpert !

## How to Talk to your Children About Sex

In a world where sex is all over the media and AIDS is a reality, Cynthia Burke, a nurse at the Regent Park Community Health Centre, says that it's now more important than ever for parents to speak to their children about sex. Burke takes us beyond the birds and the bees to discuss how parents can create an open line of communication with their children, and talk with them about issues such as sex and sexuality.

Humans have been having sex since the beginning of creation yet, when it's time for parents to talk with their kids about sex, some still get stifled with embarrassment and feelings of awkwardness.

Burke believes that it's time for parents to get over their feelings of discomfort and suggests that parents can start to do so by owning their own feelings and admitting to their children how they feel about the topic.

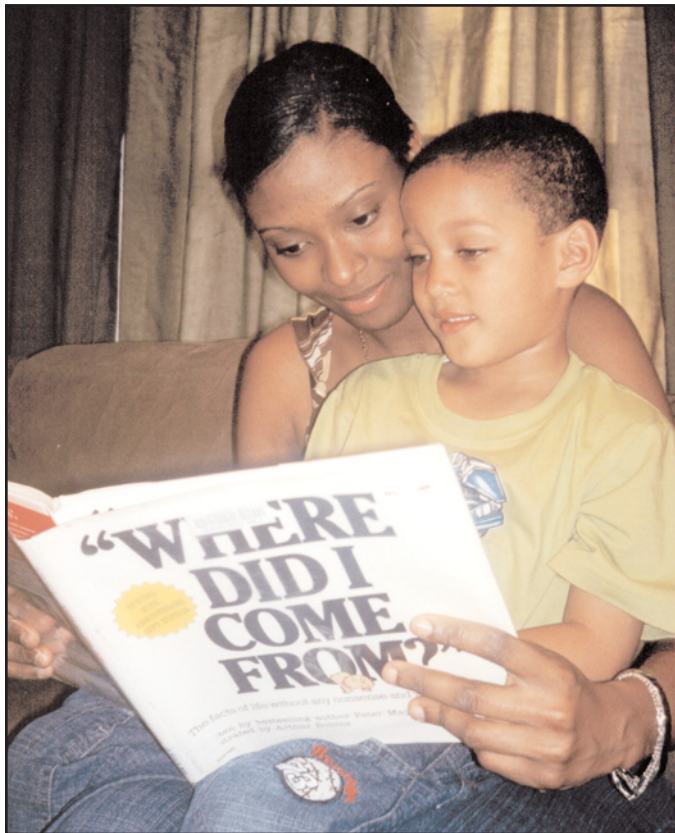
The most important factor in talking to your child about sex is your attitude. If you get extremely embarrassed talking to your kid about sex, you will communicate this embarrassment to your child. The message this embarrassment will send to the child is that sex is something shameful or dirty.

"What people need to know is that sexuality is a healthy thing. This is important for kids to know about because it fosters a good self esteem," says Burke. "Shame should not be instilled in the process of sex education."

If you can't talk to your child without conveying the message that sex is dirty and shameful, Burke suggests reading books to your child or giving them the books to read. Watching educational videos are a useful tool as well.

Embarrassment and awkward feelings aside, Burke says parents should talk to their children about sex as early as possible.

"Parents know their children best so they are the ones who are really equipped to see, to understand and to know when the child is ready to hear about the topic. When children start asking questions, you know that it's the right time."



Burke says that parents should educate their children about sex and sexuality as early as possible.

Now, when it comes down to the moment your child is ready to be informed about sex, what do you do? Burke breaks it down for us:

**1) You decide what is appropriate and beneficial to pass on to your children.** The important factors are the age of the child and his or her individual characteristics. Never lie to your child and remember that being completely honest doesn't mean telling the child everything at once. Knowing the stages of development of a child will help parents identify the right time to introduce different concepts of sex and sexuality. Burke says,

"You can't tell them about concepts they don't understand. So if you haven't talked to your child about the difference between boy and girl then there is no point in telling them about dating because they won't understand. If you haven't talked about love and dating and stuff like that, then don't talk about where babies come from because they don't have that concept yet and won't understand it yet."

**2) Listen carefully to your child's questions.** The most important thing to do before answering a child's question is to ask them what they are asking. For instance, if your child asks where they came from make sure you understand

what they mean. It would probably overwhelm your child if you started talking about ejaculation, how sperm and ovum meet, all levels of pregnancy and child birth, when your child just wants to know the country and city in which they were born.

**3) Keep the language simple and use correct terms.** Parents often try to infantilize words like using "pee-pee" instead of penis, in hopes that they will soften the blow for the child. In reality, it's the adults that are uncomfortable using the correct terms.

**4) Use teachable moments to educate your child about sex and sexuality,** especially for those children who don't

ask their parents questions about sex. For instance, if you and your child are watching TV and there's a pregnant woman on the screen, you may take this opportunity to explain how babies are made, relationships and/or body parts.

**5) Check out what they already know and let your children know what you think and feel about sexuality.**

**6) Don't be afraid to say you don't know.** Get the information you need to answer their question and give it to them in a timely fashion. Otherwise, your child will find the information elsewhere and this runs the risk of them being misinformed. Parents who can admit to their children that they themselves don't know something or feel uncomfortable talking about a topic instills the feeling in the child that it's OK not to know everything.

**7) Remember that it's important to talk not only about sex but also about all aspects of sexuality.** For the definition of sexuality, check out our Web site: [www.catchdaflava.com](http://www.catchdaflava.com).



da Flava's Sexpert

### Did your Parents ever Talk to you about Sex?

"I asked my parents what the meaning of sex when I was around seven- or eight-years-old. They just told me that I'm too young to think of about it. I wanted to try it just so I could prove I wasn't too young to do it. So I fooled around but never did the real, real thing."

~J. L., 17, Central Commerce

"My mom gave me the *Sex for Dummies* book last week. I didn't need it because I already had sex. She just wanted me to know more about STDs and sexuality and stuff. The book was better than talking with my mom about sex face to face. You get more detail from a book, you don't feel shy reading a book and sometimes parents don't know all the answers."

~M. M., 16

"We're Muslims...you know Muslims, they don't talk to their kids about sex, they just do it a lot. My mother only told me 'Ahmed, you shouldn't have sex until you're married.' I learned the rest from my friends."

~A. A., 18, Danforth Tech.

"When I was 13 and I had a 20-year-old boyfriend, my mom just told me not to sleep with him. She told me not to have sex because I could catch some disease. My mom said she could count on one hand how many partners she had but I knew from the time I was 13-years-old that I would be different. It's a different time, young people are having sex differently and facing different issues. Young people are a lot more promiscuous; sex once meant something now it means nothing. Everyone is sleeping with everyone and diseases are being transmitted so quickly."

~V. S., 15, Northern

"My dad told me 'Before you have sex, I want to have a talk with you.' They always told me to use protection and that sex is a spiritual thing and you can't just do it with anybody."

~D. C., 15, Eastern Commerce

**Next issue: The dangers and delights of internet dating.**

**Do You have any questions or concerns for da Sexpert? Don't be afraid to ask!**

**E-mail me:**  
[cdfsexpert@hotmail.com](mailto:cdfsexpert@hotmail.com)  
**Da Sexpert will be offering advice about relationships and sex in every issue of *Catch da Flava*.**



# What's Your Beef?

## Controlling Parents

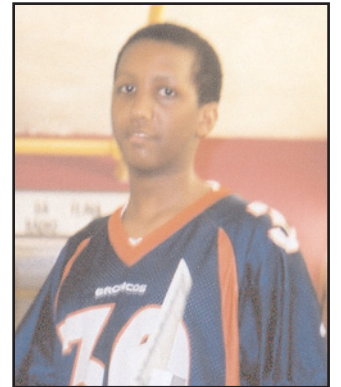
Does over-parenting drive every kid and teen crazy? Yes, it does and it needs to stop. I see 15-year-olds who have to go home before kids who are 10-years-old. Who's getting over-parented and who isn't? I think you can tell. Shouldn't it be the other way around? I think so. What do those over-protective parents say in response to this? "Well, anything can happen, especially in Regent Park." But what they don't know is that when it starts to get dark, many children are outside playing in the park while parents are socializing and watching over them. Older and more responsible adolescents, on the other hand, are forced to remain indoors by their parents because parents fear that they will get themselves in some kind of trouble in this allegedly dangerous and unpredictable neighbourhood.

Teens don't need adult supervision the way children do. When young

people feel like they're being treated like kids, this creates a rift between them and their more independent friends and it also strains the parent-teen relationship. Eventually, these teens start to rebel. Now I know what concerned parents are thinking: "If you don't parent, then the kid goes crazy and starts doing dumb things and rebels; and if you do parent then the same thing happens." So what should parents do? They should set clear rules but avoid being harsh by yelling or punishing their child for every single small mistake he or she makes. Big mistakes do deserve disciplinary action if a teenager breaks a rule that a parent has clearly set. With that being said, parents still have to negotiate a reasonable curfew with their teen, as well as appropriate punishments if he or she comes home late without calling. Always discuss rules and consequences with your teen and explain why they exist.

Let's move on to another important issue: parents should let their children, especially teens, choose their own clothes as soon as they develop a certain style and are able to dress themselves. Parents shouldn't force their kids to wear what they want them to wear because they can make the child feel very uncomfortable, depending on how different their tastes are. But there are certain occasions where it's appropriate for children to dress up and wear suits and dress shoes. For instance, if a family is going to a funeral a parent can't have their child walking around in a colourful T-shirt and jeans or anything equally inappropriate. There are also some items of clothing that parents should prevent their child from wearing like gang-related or overly revealing clothes. It just doesn't make sense to let youths wear something that could potentially get them hurt. Parents have to set rules early on and address every issue their child experiences with-

out overwhelming him or her. Trust me, most kids will listen to their parents as long as they can justify their parents' points of view and as long as they feel that their parents understand their needs.



*da Flava's Jissa Ibrahim, 16,  
Central Tech.*

## School Dress Codes

Anyone who has been to high school in the past five years has noticed that the rules and regulations regarding the way students dress have changed. For instance, most schools have banned the wearing of bandannas, but many others have also banned the wearing of all headgear. Some schools even forbid students to wear tank tops and miniskirts.

Whatever the regulations may be, there will always be someone who disagrees with them and I am one of the dissenters. Children and adolescents have a lot of creativity and society should let them express it as they please. In my opinion, I believe dress codes are a form of discrimination against youngsters. Authority figures do not even ask youths about their thoughts on the subject before

restricting their choices of what they can or can't wear to school.

I once went to a school where uniforms were mandatory for students to wear. I chose to go to that school because I figured that I wouldn't be late for school as a result of having to pick out my outfit every morning. I wasn't forced to wear a uniform because I chose to attend that school. It is when students are forced to dress a certain way and denied choice that they rebel. This is why I'm challenging forced school dress codes in the GTA.

Personally, my appearance is an aspect of my personality. I express who I am when I dress. In fact, I don't like when people look the same because no one is identical; even twins have their differences amidst their similarities.

When I went to a school to interview staff members about the dress-code issue, they did not give me enough information to change how I feel about the topic, as the teachers' only defence for the dress code was to bring up the gang issue. A principal told me that these regulations came about after a number of delinquents began wearing pieces of clothing with specific characters or colours to identify themselves as a part of a gang. This regulation leaves students without anything acceptable to wear except a jacket and a tie. This is ludicrous!

Sometimes I think that maybe this enforced dress code is about teachers wanting to prepare adolescents for the workforce and therefore a dress code will teach them how to dress appropriately for a job. However, I believe that they

should let children and teens be themselves and let them decide what they want to wear. Youth need to discover who they are by setting their own standards.



*da Flava's Fénide Hérard, 21*



## Radio with an Urban Youth Perspective....

Tune in to *Catch da Flava* Youth Radio on CKLN 88.1 FM on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month @ 7:20 p.m.



# NO!!

It's so easy, so accessible and so cheap to download music. Who wants to pay \$15 to \$20 for a CD when they can get all the songs they want at no cost to them?

Let's think about the musicians and bands making the music. They spend months - some even years - to create their art, not just for the listeners but for themselves. What about their say in this? They pour their hearts into their songs, striving to put their thoughts and feelings into the lyrics we see on album sleeves, searching for that unique melody, that catchy hook, those captivating opening notes that make us want to listen just a little longer.

Oh well, it doesn't matter. It's not important anyway. Unfortunately, that's the way many people would respond. But for some of us, music has meaning and substance. There are hidden implications in the lyrics of songs if we listen with care. And to sit in front of a computer and with one click of a mouse download someone's hard work without paying for it well, that's stealing.

Imagine going into a record store, picking up a CD and then strolling out without paying for it. The security personnel would be on you in seconds. You could then be banned from store property, charged costly fines and in extreme cases, given jail time. Many of us know it's wrong to steal, to take something that doesn't belong to us. What makes music piracy acceptable, then?

This is not about downloading a song or two with intentions of sampling a new release; this is about people who download every song off an entire CD so they don't have to pay for it. If enough people start downloading complete albums then record sales will plummet. This doesn't just affect the musicians but the record companies, who are the ones that ultimately decide whether or not to grant artists recording time. Without the record executives, many of the songs we've come to love wouldn't be around today.

A great deal of controversy surrounds music piracy right now. Record companies are upset because they're not profiting and angry record executives and musicians are beginning to take matters into their own hands. All of a sudden lawsuits are appearing and there is a massive crackdown on perpetrators. Artists like Metallica and Radiohead have taken their own measures to prevent the sharing of newly released songs by placing a copy controlled device in the CDs that foils any attempt to copy music from the original record onto a blank CD.

No one would appreciate having cherished possessions taken away from them without their consent, yet we're not thinking of the musicians who are victims of this thievery known as music piracy. The least we can do as music lovers is to respect the efforts invested by the musicians and to support rather than take from them.



*da Flava's Meymey Fung, 17,  
Western Collegiate*

# FACE OFF

## Is it right to download music off the internet?



# YES!!

Kazaa is a music file-sharing program that makes listening to your favourite songs fast and accessible. However, there is much controversy over these peer-to-peer file-sharing networks because people are beginning to think that downloading music is responsible for the crash of some music industries.

In my opinion, these industries are failing because their music is no good. I believe that people will continue to buy the CDs of those groups they love, and those musicians will continue to benefit from their multimillion-selling albums. Face it, the good music groups profit and have their names on the radio before it's publicly mentioned that their albums have hit platinum. That means that people are buying their CDs.

Some people think that musicians are ripped-off when people download their songs because their time and effort isn't raking in the dollars. It is also thought that listeners disrespect an artist's piece by not paying for it. Well, maybe people would feel a bit sorrier if they saw artists pouring more heart and soul and less

rhinestones and fancy mobiles in their music videos. Many people don't even have enough money to purchase a shiny new CD, so instead they turn to their computers. This is the case for most adolescents, who are the main contributors to the music industry.

Another beef record companies have with music piracy is that they themselves are not winning. Lawsuits appear out of an appetite for money. These record companies are dissatisfied with the turnout of their newly released CDs, so who can they scapegoat except the downloaders? According to recent research conducted by Felix Oberholzer-Gee of the Harvard Business School and Koleman Strumpf of the University of North Carolina, internet music piracy is not responsible for declining CD sales. In their study, they tracked millions of music files downloaded through the OpenNap file-trading network and compared them with CD sales of the same music albums. They concluded that, "At most, file sharing can explain a tiny fraction of this decline."

Another fact that's interesting about downloading music is that nowadays we have MP3 players, which are small and chic digital music players that allow you to carry more than one thousand songs in your breast-pocket. However, these songs don't just materialize out of thin air, they must be downloaded from the Web. That's correct, these machines are designed to let you to listen to an unlimited number of songs downloaded from networks like Kazaa. If record companies and artists have such a big problem with music downloads, why don't they start suing the people who invented the gadgets that make listening to downloaded music so fashionable?

People shouldn't feel bad for downloading music. Many still do buy CDs and some of these people have previously sampled a song off the internet first. Don't think of it as a crime; with the right intentions it would be impossible for you to be sent to jail for downloading.



*da Flava's Bo San Chan, 17,  
Malvern Collegiate*



# Choice Is Yours

## Bring Your Own Wine

The Ontario government is considering passing a law that would permit individuals to bring their own wine to restaurants. People would even be allowed to carry opened (e.g., re-capped) bottles of wine throughout our city, which is currently illegal. Sure this idea may please some, but it's doubtful that it will please the majority.

First of all, if the proposal goes through it will definitely reinforce an already classist and oppressive police force. Allowing restaurant-goers to carry about open wine bottles while ticketing, fining, and harassing other less privileged people for carrying open beer or liquor (or even wine) bottles is absurd, because these underprivileged people are usually individuals who are homeless or live in low-income areas and/or public housing developments, and they sometimes get an additional charge of being intoxicated in public. Public drunkenness is definitely not a charge that will be laid on those fine-dining, wine-drinking folks because a) they will no doubt have an "acceptable" appearance, sporting suits and elegant dresses or what not, b) they will be bearing a wine bottle and not a typical bottle of whisky concealed in a typical paper bag and c) they will be seen in trendy restaurant areas and not parks, alleyways, or on front-steps in ghettoized neighbourhoods.

The whole premise of creating special laws for wine-drinkers is also playing into years of class-based/classist behaviour. Blue-collar workers head off for a beer after work; white-collar workers sip wine while they dine. Perhaps this is a little stereotypical, but when looking into the wine versus beer culture, this is undoubtedly what the politicians are thinking.

So, why not permit individuals to bring their own brand of beer into restaurants? Part of the argument for this law is to allow customers to enjoy their preferred type of wine that restaurants might not carry. Well, many restaurants do not carry a wide variety of beer. But this is not the issue at hand. The real issue is that there is a fear that beer drinkers might get rowdy or drunk. Again, it has something to do with the culture; having two or three beers is seen as excessive, especially when had at lunch. However, drinking a couple of glasses of wine during a meal is perfectly normal. This is ironic considering that a bottle of wine contains much more alcohol than a bottle of beer, and really, who is going to keep track of how much customers drink of their own wine and what they do with the alcohol after they leave the restaurant?

Another reason why this proposed law is biased and inconsiderate is because it shows no regard for those who deliberately want to work or dine in an

alcohol-free environment. This proposal by the Ontario Government would permit any restaurant, licensed or not, to apply for a corking permit which would allow the restaurant's staff to uncork and serve wine brought in by customers. There are several problems with this. First, how would these corking permits affect young people? The permits would have the potential to eliminate jobs for youth since anyone under 18 years cannot serve alcohol. Young people who work at unlicensed restaurants with corking permits would be prevented from working a table with wine-bringing customers and as a result would lose out on tips. They may also be prevented from working certain shifts when there is an anticipation of people bringing their own wine, or worse yet, the restaurant may eliminate all minor employees to prevent any such conflict.

Furthermore, there must be consideration for some people, namely recovering alcoholics and families, who rely on certain restaurants to be alcohol-free. Whether someone is a worker or a diner, having patrons enter an unlicensed restaurant with a bottle of wine can be discouraging. For a recovering alcoholic, the mere act of serving wine could trigger a relapse, and the responsibility and expectation to not drink the remaining wine on the way home could also trigger a relapse.




Some families prefer to raise their children in an alcohol-free environ-

ment and rely on a variety of restaurants to choose from. Where would such a family go for a celebration dinner if places like McDonald's or Taco Bell were the only safe bets for a wine-free environment? Would Pizza Hut request a corking permit? Of course, it would not be expected that young children would go to certain high-class restaurants, but what about 14 to 18-year-olds who want to have a special dinner for graduating Grade 8 or completing high school, for their sweet sixteen, prom/formal or semi-formal? Would young people under 18 even be allowed in an unlicensed but cork-permitted restaurant?

There are many factors that raise caution in regards to this proposal. Could it be that the Ontario government decided these factors were not worth mention or thought? In 1986, the Liberals proposed allowing the sale of beer and wine in grocery stores. Although this was an entirely different issue, they have not revisited it since. Eighteen years later it appears that the Liberals are veering off course. Have the Ontario Liberals abandoned their party's old views on alcohol? Or could it be that the new (Liberal) Ontario government is still catering to the 90s?

*da Flava's Sarah Ayers, 24*

**1 standard drink = 13.6 grams of alcohol =**

wine	spirits	beer
	or 	or 
5 oz/142 mL of wine (12% alcohol)	1.5 oz/43 mL of spirits (40% alcohol)	12 oz/341 mL of regular strength beer (5% alcohol)

Higher alcohol beers and coolers have more alcohol than one standard drink.

## Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines

0	Zero drinks = lowest risk of an alcohol-related problem
2	No more than 2 standard drinks on any one day
9	Women: up to 9 standard drinks a week
14	Men: up to 14 standard drinks a week



## Governor General Visits Regent Park Focus

April 1 wasn't the typical April Fools Day. As a matter of fact, there wasn't anything foolish about the day. What happened was something great and exceptional. Regent Park Focus received an amazing surprise visit from Adrienne Clarkson, the Governor General of Canada.



*The Governor General of Canada Adrienne Clarkson at Regent Park Focus Media Arts presentation.*

The role of the Governor General was instituted when Canada became a country at Confederation in 1867. Our system of government is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy which means that Queen Elizabeth II is the Queen of Canada and her will is represented by the Governor General of Canada. Sworn in on Oct. 7, 1999, Adrienne Clarkson became Canada's 26th Governor General.

Gov. Gen. Adrienne Clarkson is the say-all and end-all when it comes to approving and passing federal laws. She is also the commander-in-chief of the Canadian Forces.

Born in Hong Kong, Gov. Gen. Adrienne Clarkson came to Canada as a refugee with her family during the war in 1942. She received her early education in the Ottawa public school system and later obtained an Honours BA in English and MA in English Literature from the University of Toronto. She also did post-graduate work at the Sorbonne in France.

Before being appointed Governor General, Clarkson served as chairwoman of the board of trustees of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. She was also the executive producer and host of the CBC television

program, *Something Special*.

During her 90-minute visit to Regent Park Focus, Gov. Gen. Adrienne Clarkson enjoyed a presentation of videos created by local youths and also radio excerpts from *Catch da Flava* radio, a local youth program broadcasted from Regent Park. She also participated in a taped broadcast, hosted by one of the youth journalists for *Catch da Flava*.

Having the Governor General in the Focus environment was an incredible experience. The youth were honoured and proud to have Gov. Gen. Adrienne Clarkson view their work. The Governor General's visit to Regent Park included tours to Dixon Hall, the Regent Park Community Centre and Pathways to Education. For more information log onto [www.catchdaflava.com](http://www.catchdaflava.com) and check out the radio archives.

*da Flava's Emmanuel Kedini, 22*



*Isaac from Thistletown wins first place in photo festival.*

## City Youth Capture their Turf on Film

More than 100 kids from social housing communities across Toronto participated in a program designed to encourage young people to tell their stories and experiences through photography. The youth, from communities such as Thistletown, Trethewey, Scarborough, St. Jamestown and Regent Park, were provided with disposable cameras and sent out to capture their emotions and community on film. They were also connected with grown-up photographers who gave them photography lessons and discussed their pictures. The project, which was organized by the Toronto Housing Corporation, resulted in a show called "The way I see it" and was a part of Toronto's annual Contact Photo Festival.



On Wednesday May 19, teacher candidates of the Regent Park York University Teachers Education Program celebrated the completion of their year-long teaching program. Congratulations!



The Garden club from Nelson Mandela Park Public School would like to thank Evergreen/Toyota and the Canadian Wildlife Federation for donating \$550 and \$492 respectively to plant a beautiful garden. Everyone is invited to join the Garden club and to share the colourful garden.

## Regent Park Happenings

### Regent Park Focus General Youth Membership Meeting

**Saturday, June 19,  
From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Come out and voice your  
opinions concerning  
programs offered at**

**Regent Park Focus  
600 Dundas St. East  
(rear basement)  
Open to all youth  
ages: 12 - 23**

### Sunday in the Park 2004

**Come out and have fun during the  
13th annual Sunday in the Park.**

**- Youth parade**

**"Take Back the Park: Marching  
against Violence"**

**- action-packed activities, entertain-  
ment, food and much more.**

**Sunday, July 11  
from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**For more info contact  
Phil Nazar:  
416-363-4234, ext. 222.**

### Feeling Stressed?

**Try a gentle, hatha yoga class  
summer sessions  
Wednesdays 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

**The Yoga Den at Focus  
Call Cheryl at:  
416- 864-1511 ext. 678**

**A Video about youth and the  
Regent Park redevelopment  
is available for schools and  
community groups**

**For more info contact:  
Steve Marshall 416-989-6269**

## The Eyes and Ears of Regent Park

**WWW.CATCHDAFLAVA.COM**

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FAX: 416-863-9440

## Regent Park Focus

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