York Region students get a taste of fire fighting



By Brock Weir

Grade 3 students across York Region put their creativity to the test recently, brainstorming new and colourful ways to convey the message of fire safety.

Their hard work paid off on Friday as kids from all nine York Region municipalities joined their respective fire chiefs in Newmarket as they were put through their paces to experience the day in the life of a fire fighter.

?If your house is on fire and your door is hot, wave the brightest thing you own out your window and yell for help and if you have a phone in your room call 911 and keep yelling,? wrote Alex, a student at Hartman Public School, in his poster of a house against a clear blue sky. ?Make sure you check your fire alarm monthly, check your carbon monoxide detector weekly, do stuff under your door with clothes so no smoke comes in, and also make sure your family has an escape plan.?

Brooke, also a Hartman student, conveyed similar sentiments with a chipper-looking smoke detector complete with arms and legs, who brought the catchy message: ?Have my beep where you sleep!?

?I showed it is important to have a fire alarm close to where you sleep,? she explained. ?Don't go back in the house if it is still beeping!?
Kids were put through exercises by fire fighters and firefighting students, culminating in a bucket brigade challenge to win the coveted Red Bucket Trophy (eat your heart out, Mirror Ball Trophy!).

?Today is all about them experiencing what it would be like to be a fire fighter, so we have a bunch of stations set up where they can try things like search and rescue, working with the EMS, or the bucket brigade, but overall we wanted to make sure they were getting some public education about how smoke alarms save lives, new carbon monoxide requirements, and things like that,? said Central York Fire Services firefighter Tim Tustin, who led Team Aurora with firefighting student Jordan Blaser, who will serve as the CYFS' smoke alarm student this summer. ?It is about bringing them some awareness that will help in their own homes.

?I hope we do really well. This is a really great event every year and I just want the kids to have a great time. This wasn't offered when I was their age, but I did get to do a co-op and got to experience the fire department when I was in high school. I had a blast and it put me on this path for sure.?

While Brooke was especially looking forward to crawling on all fours through an obstacle course in search of a stuffed animal, simulating a search and rescue operation, Tim was particularly eager for the bucket brigade.

?It gives the kids a chance to get the chiefs and all the dignitaries a little bit wet and that is my favourite part,? he laughs.