

VIEW FROM QUEEN'S PARK: Blackdown, Treasure Mills, Daycare Waitlist Fees, Hospital Funding and more

By Chris Ballard, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

Blackdown Cadet Training Centre

I spent a good part of last Friday at the Blackdown Cadet Training Centre on Canadian Forces Base Borden, watching cadets from across Ontario build their physical fitness, personal confidence and leadership abilities. What a sight.

Thousands of girls, boys and young men and women, ages 12 to 18, go through the training centre each summer. Many of the officers leading the program are members of Canadian Forces reserve units.

I was there for Employers Day, which gives employers, and those interested in employing cadets and reservists, the opportunity to meet the young men and women, and to get a sense of the training they undertake. I met a senior executive of an electronics chain store who attended to find out why the reservist he employs is such a good employee.

He had a hunch it was because of the training, which instills strategic thinking skills, self-confidence, teamwork and personal discipline, to name a few. In just a few short hours, he realized his hunch was right ? reserve soldiers and cadets have what it takes to be excellent employees.

Many of the skills they are taught as cadets and as reserve soldiers are transferable.

If I was looking to hire a student, I'd look for someone with cadet training. I also know a number of reservists with the Queen's York Rangers, based here in Aurora. The personal skills they develop are the skills any employer would be delighted to find in an employee.

I believe the executive I met Friday will agree. And I suspect he'll be looking to hire more reservists in the years ahead. It's my hope that local businesses and governments recognize the important personal skills our reservists and cadets have and actively recruit from within their ranks. For reservists who have served overseas in dangerous areas on our behalf, it's a fine way to show our support.

Province invests in Aurora jobs

Congratulations to Aurora's Treasure Mills food manufacturer, located on Engelhard Drive, for receiving a \$100,000 grant to expand production at its plant. Treasure Mills will use the money to install automated baking and washing equipment.

This will allow the company to hire more employees and increase production. The grant for Treasure Mills was part of a \$2.5 million investment the provincial and federal governments made recently in York Region food and beverage production facilities, as part of our Growing Forward 2 initiative.

This funding allows for programs that improve development and sustainability in Canada's agri-food and agri-products. Treasure Mills is a Canadian-owned company manufacturing health-conscious baked goods, and operating in a nut- and peanut-free facility, with over 30,000 sq. ft. of production space.

The company uses natural ingredients and screens for allergens. It doesn't use artificial flavours or colors in any of its products. In Aurora, Treasure Mills products are available at major grocery stores.

Ending Child Care Wait List Fees

Earlier this month the province of Ontario announced it would end fees for child care centre wait lists and home agencies. Starting September 1, the ban will prevent daycares from charging fees or requiring a deposit for children to be put on a waitlist. These changes were made after feedback from public consultations.

The feedback echoed overwhelming support for the ban from parents, providers and different municipalities. The Ontario government has doubled childcare funding to more than \$1 billion annually, since 2003-2004, with the number of licensed child care spaces increased to 351,000.

Hospital Funding

Three York Region hospitals received funding for repairs and upgrades as part of the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund. Ontario is giving \$175 million to hospitals across the province, an increase of \$50 million over last year. The funding will allow the hospitals to undertake upgrades, replace roofs, windows, HVAC systems, fire alarms and back-up generators.

The funding for three hospitals in York Region includes \$72,622 for Southlake Regional Health Centre.

This additional, new funding shows the province of Ontario is keeping its promise to put patients first. Across the province more than 135 hospitals will receive this support for critical repairs. I am proud to be part of a government that knows and understands the value of investing and supporting our health care system.

2016 Rio Olympics

The Olympics are a great way for the world to come together to foster sportsmanship and unity. Team Canada has 313 athletes competing with 141 of them coming from Ontario.

York Region has some amazing representation this year including Andre De Grasse, Phylisia George, Michelle Li, Maxime Brink-Croteau, Bolade Ajomale, Josh Binstock, Sam Schachter, Belinda Trussell and Rosie MacLennan.

I enjoy watching how the Olympics brings together, not just our town and province, but our entire country. When watching our athletes we all share their common goal?to go for gold! Team Canada athletes inspire us all and show us just how far you can go with hard work, dedication and heart. I would like to offer my congratulations to all of the Olympians from York Region for representing Team Canada at the 2016 Rio Olympics. No matter the outcome, you do us proud!