

## Youth are active at Our Lady of Grace

**By Chris McGowan**

Aurora's Catholic Church, Our Lady of Grace (OLG), that is located in the centre of town, has a large congregation of 5500 families. The church is presided over by Pastor Father Joe Gorman, and Associate Pastor Father Joseph Pham. The Youth Group at OLG is not only large, but very strong and active.

The Youth Group at the Church has seven Youth Ministry Leaders as the group itself has 45 active members. The Youth involved in the group range from grades 7 to grade 12. Chris Martin, one of the Youth Ministry Leaders said "The youth group is very active in outreach initiatives."

In addition to the demands of school and extracurricular activities the Youth at OLG have been busy giving back. Here are some of the activities they are involved in.

Once a month the Youth members of OLG organize toiletry items, cleaning supplies and food at the Aurora Food Pantry.

They are also involved with Welcoming Arms (Aurora Reach out Mission Services) which is an ecumenical outreach program. At Welcoming Arms, they provide assistance with organizing food vouchers, gift cards, toiletries and cleaning supplies. The OLG Youth also accept donations towards Welcoming Arms at mass time.

Twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall, the Youth Group, along with some of the Leaders participate in a homeless outreach. They make sandwiches for the homeless at their own homes and bring them to the church where a bus picks them up and takes them to downtown Toronto.

Upon arrival in Toronto, the bus is parked at St. Michael's cathedral, at Jarvis and Queen where the OLG Youth begin their task of walking around in groups handing out the sandwiches that they have made to the homeless on the streets. "We usually get about sixty youth participants out to this effort" said Martin.

They participate in anti-litter day which is being held on April 26th this year, and their efforts will be put towards cleaning up Fleming Park and Machell Park in Aurora.

A few times a year they spend time visiting local Seniors in homes in the town of Aurora. Two of the homes they frequent are Park Place Manor and Aurora Resthaven where they read to the Seniors and say the Rosary with the Catholic residents.

At a time when churches are struggling to stay afloat and trying to get their Youth involved in the church, it seems that OLG is doing something right. "More Youth are joining all the time" said Martin.

Well done Our Lady of Grace!