



Jamie Smith • Oakville Beaver

Keegan O'Leary is Oakville's first Junior Worm Farmer and is excited about the prospect of creating compost from organic waste.

Upgrades to Iroquois Ridge pool to start in September

Problems associated with the depth of the Iroquois Ridge Community Centre Pool will be rectified starting in September.

The upgrades will be carried out in order to meet recently revised FINA (Federation Internationale de Natation) standards. When the pool tank was completed in October 2000, it conformed to the FINA Handbook, but on Nov. 14, 2000, the FINA standards were adjusted. Pools constructed in Canada after December, 2002 must comply with the new FINA standards if they are to be used for competitive swimming.

"While FINA does not require the Town to change the pool, it is in the best interest of the community that the pool provide the highest margin of protection and the best possible aquatic environment for competitive use and training."

said Parks and Recreation Director Bob McFarland.

The pool was meant to meet international competitive standards of 1.25 metres deep, but FINA changed the standard to 1.35 metres deep after the Sydney Olympics. The diving depth at the new pool also became an issue after two young women were injured. One woman struck her face on the bottom of the pool and received a bloody nose, while a second young woman received a concussion after striking her forehead on the pool bottom during a swim meet.

The double-pool aquatic facility is considered the crown jewel of the \$10 million, 56,000-sq.-ft. recreation centre, pool and library complex on Glenashton Drive. The pool is unique in that it is a true competitive swim meet-style facility that

also serves the community's needs for recreational swimming and lessons. There's a traditional eight-lane pool as well as a leisure pool.

The upgrade involves moving the point of the slope that separates the deep end from the shallow end from five to six metres further than it is currently. To do this, a section of the bottom of the pool must be excavated and a new floor installed.

Construction is set to begin after Labour Day weekend and last approximately 12-14 weeks. The total cost of the upgrade is approximately \$80,000.

Thanks to the goodwill contribution of the pool's architect, Stafford Haensli Architects, as well as pool contractor Acapulco Pools and the general contractor Jasper Construction, the Town's share of the cost will be \$30,000.

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Junior Worm Farmer Day on Saturday

By Howard Mozel

OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

This Saturday is Junior Worm Farmer Day in Oakville.

Yes, you read that right: from 10 a.m. to noon about 40 young invertebrate ranchers, aged seven to 10 years, will learn to raise Red Wigglers to make compost from organic waste as part of a Halton Region pilot project. The project helps encourage youngsters to recycle as an environmentally-aware program for their schools.

After all, "vermicomposting" is a perfect way to convert organic material into nutrient-rich compost using worms known as Red Wigglers, the benefits of which include a reduction of garbage headed to landfill. (The average Canadian produces a ton of waste each year and an estimated one-third of this is organic matter.)

The Red Wigglers, however, are efficient little eaters who consume half their body weight in waste every day and their own by-product, or castings, is a natural and nitrogen-rich fertilizer ideal for house plants and gardens.

Saturday's event takes place at the offices of ConnectUs International, located at 379A Kerr St. with Cathy Nesbitt, of Cathy's Crawly Composters, providing the worms and the expertise.

"I know there are plenty of parents who would want to encourage their children about the environment," said Donna Messer of ConnectUs. "We want to do this as many times as possible."

Vermicomposting encourages children to put their organic leftovers (everything but dairy products and meat) into their worm bin so they can watch natural recycling in action with no unpleasant smell. When it's time to harvest the castings, worms can easily be redirected away to make the collection job easier.

"You can actually herd worms," said Messer. "They're easy to keep and they do their job."

Worms work faster than traditional composting and can be used all year — outdoors when the temperature is appropriate for them, inside during the winter. Even their "bedding" — coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, shredded newspaper — wind up as castings, too. Crushed eggshells act like surrogate teeth for the worms by helping grind up organics as the creatures move.

According to Messer, children will not only have fun while they learn, but can start a fundraising activity at school by selling the castings as fertilizer. (This is already in use nourishing flowers along Kerr Street.)

The worms can also teach kids a biology lesson or two, since one handful of the critters will soon become two once they reproduce.

Messer said her grandson, Keegan O'Leary, is "Oakville's first worm farmer" He is thrilled by his home composter, said Messer, and will be a speaker at Junior Worm Farmer Day. Attendees — who are coming from area schools and summer camps — will also be treated to the special video, *Worm Mania*, a worm mascot and a vermicomposting starter kit. (A full outfit can be purchased for \$29.95.)

"It'll be the kids who will be stars of the day," said Messer, who can be reached at 905-337-9578 for more information.

"We're all pretty excited."

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