



# RICK JOHNSON



REGIONAL COUNCILLOR  
CHAIR: DURHAM REGION PUBLIC WORKS  
CHAIR: ONTARIO TRAFFIC CONFERENCE  
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## 1999 NEWSLETTER

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I would like to thank all of the community and our friends for their expressions of condolences and understanding to my family throughout this past tragic year. The Mayor, Members of Council and our Town staff have been excellent and very supportive during this difficult time. Losing a family member, as some of you may know, is a very traumatic and heartbreaking experience that I just cannot explain to those of you that haven't gone through it. I ask everyone to give your children a hug for all of us.

Our son, Russell David Johnson, was born July 25, 1980 and on March 28, 1999 he was taken from us in a single motor vehicle accident on Brock Road in Claremont. Dealing with this has not been easy for our family. Our oldest son, Chris, had just moved home this past February and is now attending Durham College. My wife, Susan, has gone back to work as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Children's Wish Foundation. I have kept very involved in doing charity auctions and fundraising. We have also entered a Grieving Counseling Program with Durham Family Services. With the support of our local churches, we have also become more involved in a special project. I would like to ask for your support for this project.

The Social Development Council of Ajax & Pickering did a survey two years ago and identified the need for a Family & Youth Action Centre for North Pickering. After many meetings, we found a suitable location at the old school in Brougham which was first built in 1959. We have secured a lease from Public Works Canada and now have the facility up and running. However, it takes money to run such a facility so our family has decided, through our friends and volunteers, to lend Russell's name to a fundraising event so the proceeds can help kick-start this wonderful program. I hope you can find a way to contribute but if you can't, thank you for allowing me to be part of what I feel can only help our community's quality of life.

This past year has also been a year of change trying to deliver services in a more cost effective way, and has meant many changes in our tax redistribution system, from the Province down. The amalgamation of Pickering, Ajax and Clarington Hydro took a lot of time and work. The Town of Pickering will see a return of approximately \$2.6 million in 1999, a further installment of approximately \$2.0 million in the year 2000 with additional dividends to follow in future years. My duties as Chair of the Durham Long Term Waste Strategy Committee led me to some interesting places throughout 1999. The recent announcement of Highway 407 coming through to Brock Road by December 2001 has brought up questions about the impact on local roads as well as an increased volume of traffic on Brock Road and surrounding neighbourhoods. We immediately formed a Task Force and are trying to resolve these issues subsequent to its completion.

The Mayor and some of the Pickering Councillors are discussing Amalgamation with Ajax. I believe the real answer is amalgamation of services and disentanglement in Regional and Local delivery of services. There is too much duplication. The cost savings must be passed on to you, the taxpayer. Improved customer services and other unforeseen future savings are my real goal.

If there are areas of concern in your neighbourhood, please do not hesitate to contact my office and we will continue working together to make Pickering a safer and better place to live and raise our children.