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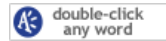
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Danforth area working to rebrand itself

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

January 05, 2009 05:00



A closed sign hung outside Michael's Meat and Deli on the Danforth yesterday.

But inside bright lights were on, music played and almost a dozen people, dressed in overalls, worked through the day to give the store a complete makeover.

Some painted the walls — changing a dowdy grey to an inviting peach — others moved wood cabinets to make the store look spacious and yet others mopped the tiled floor.

The project is the first time Danforth East residents have taken gentrification into their own hands. They've teamed up with a store owner to renovate and rebrand the business — in the process also overhauling the neighbourhood.

Usually, local business improvement groups do storefront improvement projects using city money. In this case, the year-old business group did not qualify for help, so residents initiated the project.

The idea was floated a few months ago after members heard about Parkdale stores undergoing similar renovations.

"They got money from the city, but we couldn't so we decided to pull together resources and help a store (that) wanted a new look," said an excited Ellen Long, who lives in the neighbourhood.

The result will be unveiled today: As well as a new look, the deli has been renamed The Plank Road Market in honour of the company that built the area.



COLIN MCCONNELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Five-year-old Eric Wang helps volunteer Angela Matich mix paint at Michael's Meats and Deli as they work on the store to give it a complete makeover, which has been renamed The Plank Road Market.

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Prominent Canadians called on Ottawa to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza in the face of Israel's "war crimes" as others planned to rally nationwide Thursday in support of Israelis who have been "paralyzed" for years by Hamas missile strikes.

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At least four top officials of Toronto's SickKids Foundation have left the charity — including the

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JERUSALEM - Israeli jets and helicopters bombarded the Gaza Strip on Friday and Hamas responded with a barrage of rockets on at least two cities as both sides ignored a UN call for an immediate ceasefire.

highly paid president — creating a leadership gulf the agency says it hopes to fill as soon as possible.

Rooming house objections raised

Toronto City Council will soon decide once and for all whether to zone and license rooming houses throughout Toronto.

Food programs in jeopardy



A provincial plan to help Toronto expand school breakfast programs to almost 200 low-income

neighbourhoods this year is in jeopardy if the city doesn't match new funds from Queen's Park.

No end in sight for York union strike

The union won't vote. The president won't talk. And the government won't step in.



NEW YORK - "Horrific" is how Tom Cruise described the sudden death of the son of his friend, John Travolta.

Prosecutors say Madoff was ready to send out cheques worth \$173 million



NEW YORK - Prosecutors said Thursday that investigators found 100 signed cheques worth \$173 million in

Bernard Madoff's office desk that he was ready to send out to his closest family and friends at the time of his arrest last month in what is alleged to be largest financial fraud in history.

Reaction to racism not as strong as people believe it will be, study suggests

TORONTO - Many people probably believe they would react strongly if they heard someone make a racist comment.

Panda bites third tourist in two years; jaws forced open to free man

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