

MISSISSAUGA

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Change is in the air at Greater Toronto's last urban trailer park.

And even on the ground, where small red ribbons have been appearing throughout the week.

With the 60-year-old property's sale to developers, and the forced eviction of some 100 people looming for next March, surveyors have been crawling all over the tiny park on a prime slice of Mississauga land.

Park resident Yvonne Carnerie spied the strangers a couple of days ago, stapling red markers at intervals into the ground.

"I was thinking of going out and pulling them out," she says, with a chuckle.

But others have been keeping a close eye on West End Motors & Trailer Park at Dundas St. W., near Hurontario. And thanks to them, something else will be in the air today – the scent of barbecued hot dogs and hamburgers, as residents of a neighbouring highrise plan a fundraiser.

Organizers Brenda Whitehall, Lorne Tyne and Glen Moffatt expect about 1,000 people to attend the one-day fundraiser, which runs from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

They've cut deals with local grocers and soft drink companies, getting mountains of supplies for the event, with all proceeds going to legal and moving costs for residents. Sponsors like M & M Meat Shops, West End Bakery, a potato chip company and a local convenience store are taking part in the drive.

"We just wanted to do something nice for them," says Whitehall, who has been handing out pamphlets, faxing potential sponsors and ordering supplies for the last three weeks. "We think it's pretty crappy that they're getting kicked out of their homes."

Indeed, many residents – pensioners, teachers, entrepreneurs – will be exchanging homes with yards and porches for anonymous apartments, nursing homes, or worse. They don't own the land, paying a small monthly rent instead. So when it's cleared in March, their sole compensation will be a \$3,000 stipend to help them move their trailers. Only trouble is, the nearest park, Twin Pines at Dundas St. W. and Dixie Rd. won't accept old, ailing models. "A lot of these trailers have been here for as long as Cooksville's been around," Whitehall says. "These trailers will probably fall apart as soon as they try to uproot them. So they're going to lose their homes."

Glen Moffatt, who owns a trailer in Erin Mills, knows moving any of these goliaths will cost many times more than the \$3,000 residents will receive.

"God knows what condition the wheels and bearings are in," he said. Yvonne Carnerie has her eye on two trailers at Twin Pines. Like many trailers at that park, they went up for sale not long after the news of West End's closure – at premium prices.

"There's one for \$139,000," Carnerie sighs. "And it's not even like here."

Still, she has a mentally disabled son to support, so Carnerie, a hospital staffer on disability leave, will see if the bank will help, by transferring the \$40,000 mortgage she has here.

As for the fundraiser, she appreciates the effort, but she's not overly optimistic about how far it can propel this tight-knit community. At least, she sighs, "it will make us aware that the community is behind us."

But even in a time of distress, there will be entertainment – of sorts. Moffatt will be riding around selling cans of pop from his Cruzin Cooler – a cooler fitted with tires, handlebars and an electric motor that reaches a top speed of 22 km/h.