

# Fresh Air Fund needs helping hand

BY MICHELLE SHEPHARD  
STAFF REPORTER

Albano Kang waved his hands excitedly above his head.

Joined by six other youths yesterday from Toronto's Silent Voice camp, he was using his arms and hands to celebrate learning how to row.

The 14-year-old attends the summer camp for deaf young people, aged 6 to 18, who were invited this week to Bayside Rowing Camp, at the foot of Leslie St. near Unwin Ave.

## Fresh Air Fund

GOAL: \$365,000  
TO DATE: \$283,728

It is among the many activities sponsored by The Toronto Star's Fresh Air Fund to bring some exciting summer fun to inner city youngsters.

But with the summer half over, the fund is about \$81,000 short of its goal of \$365,000 to provide thousands of children an antidote to the sticky streets.

Star readers are urged to dig deep, perhaps in memory of the wonderful times they had



RON BULL / TORONTO STAR

**TEAM EFFORT:** Garth Nichols signs tips to deaf children at the Bayside Rowing Camp yesterday.

at a summer camp, like Albano Kang and his friends are having now.

"These guys learn at the same rate, if not faster, because they are so focused," said Marcus Elia, 25, assistant head coach at Bayside.

They receive their rowing instructions by watching Garth Nichols, 20, who sits in the cox position.

Nichols waves his fingers individually in a fanning motion

for the word "feather," and the campers respond with the motion rowers call feathering.

Krushan Thevarajah, 13, nods his head emphatically when asked if he enjoys the rowing.

After a brief dockside lesson with counsellor Sean Lowry, he was eager to get on the water.

Beyond the dock, which has more than 20 boats, there is a 2½-kilometre stretch of water running from Leslie St. to

Cherry St., which counsellors describe as the "best rowing area in Toronto."

The water is relatively free of pollution, but the area is not scenic. An enormous heap of scrap metal blocks the view of the city and is surrounded by machinery and six cranes.

"It is an eyesore, but actually it blocks the sound of the city," said Elia.

Kim Legallais, a counsellor with Silent Voice, said most of the kids love learning how to row.

"We did have to make up a few signs, though," said 25-year-old Legallais, who learned sign language five years ago. "None of us knew the signs, if there are any, for most of the specific rowing commands."

The campers showed that deafness need not hinder performance.

"None of the kids have joined our swim team," said counsellor Margaux Yiu, 25. (You become part of the so-called swim team by involuntarily tipping your boat.)

To make a donation to the fund please write: The Star Fresh Air Fund, One Yonge St., Toronto, M5E 1E6.