

# OPINIONS

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## EDITORIAL

# Praise for Soknacki's donation of severance pay

Former councillor David Soknacki should be commended for donating the \$30,000 in severance pay he received when he left municipal politics to the Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough.

And we're not just saying that because Soknacki now writes a column on politics for *The Scarborough Mirror* called Behind the Headlines.

His gesture was the type of thing we simply don't see enough of from politicians in this country.

Most of them talk a good game, but when it comes time to actually put their words into action or, heaven forbid, their own money, far too few of them deliver.

That's why the former Ward 43 (Scarborough East) councillor's actions are

so refreshing and worthy of praise.

As reported in *The Mirror*, Soknacki decided the money he was given as severance when he left politics in August 2006 would be best used by the boys and girls club located off Galloway Road in his former riding.

The official announcement of Soknacki's donation was made earlier this month. It is the largest individual donation the club has received in its 30 years of existence.

"I felt it was the right decision for myself," he said. "I felt I've been fortunate to be in a position where I've prospered in my business and I've received adequate compensation as a councillor. I thought it was best for myself to give back to the community."

Clearly, the many youngsters who

use the Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough are glad Soknacki didn't just take the money and run.

Ron Rock, executive director of the club, said the money will be used to help renovate the building the club is in to enlarge the amount of space available for programs. At 13,000 square feet, the club was feeling cramped as there simply wasn't enough space to meet needs. Soknacki's donation will help add another 9,000 square feet of usable space to the club.

"The building renovation includes a number of new elements – a new gym, an art studio, a dance studio and more community space," Rock told *The Mirror*.

Along with some physical changes to the building, Soknacki's donation will also be used to generate even more funding for

the club. That was the key condition that Soknacki insisted upon when he made the money available to the club, that it would be used to leverage other donations. It was that condition that explains the time lag between Soknacki's resignation as councillor back in 2006 and this month's announcement.

While not giving details, Rock said there are some other funders and funding announcements to be made. That's great news as the club plays a critical role in the health, happiness and future success of so many young people. Soknacki knows the needs in the area and he knows the good the club does. Hopefully, there are more Scarborough residents who needs in their neighbourhood they could help address with a donation, be it \$30 or \$30,000.