North Halton Women's Centre grand opening

By: Vivien Fleisher

Given Halton Region's geography—especially as the Region's population density thins towards the north in the Acton and Georgetown areas—some services are more challenging to provide. Such was the case with the physical location of the Halton Women's Centre in Oakville. That changed, however, at the grand opening of the North Halton Women's Centre on Main St. in Milton on September 29. Billed as a "resource hub for women in crisis, distress or transition", Women's Centre executive director Martha Barragan explained that, while the issue of transportation for clients north of Milton will continue to be a challenge, the time to open this newest centre was now. Rather than wait for the perfect time, they went ahead and made it happen. And she said they've been welcomed with open arms by the community.

The move northward is critical for the main reason that it's a drop-in centre and no appointment is needed. For women in Acton, Georgetown and the rural areas around them, the reduced distance to such a centre will make a big difference. Offering emergency care kits, a self-care program, safety planning, and legal clinics, the location will potentially cut the trip in half for residents. Barragan said it will take a few months to a year to figure out exactly what services are of most benefit to area women, but a big focus will be those in rural areas. Funding of course is always an issue, but in a prepared statement, Halton Regional Coucnillor Gary Carr said sources like the Halton Regional Community Investment Fund, which awards grants to non-profit community services, have made the expansion of existing services possible. He added that the Centre will provide a safe supportive space for up to 500 women yearly to alleviate the stress and isolation experienced during times of crisis. Barragan said, "We want to run ourselves out of business" by expanding into every community and someday putting in the past all the things she hates, like poverty, abuse, and all the threats to women's lives that rob them and their families of independence and a healthy happy life.

Ministry of Status of Women Indira Naidoo-Harris, Milton MP Lisa Raitt, Milton Mayor Gord Krantz and Regional Councillor Mike Cluett all took part in the ribbon cutting, with Raitt saying that many come into her constituency office just up the street, and until now it was heartbreaking to have to send them down to Oakville, adding, "I'm so happy you're here."

For additional information, www.thewomenscentreofhalton.com or email milton@haltonwomenscentre.org.

Halton Regional Councillor Mike Cluett (left), Women's Centre Executive director Martha Barragan, Coordinator of Services Rachel Linder, Development/ Program Manager Jassy Hundal, Milton Mayor Gord Krantz, MPP Indira Naidoo-Harris, Milton MP Lisa Raitt.

LEGION NEWS

By: David Maloney P.R.O. ~ Branch 197

Last week, I promised further details on the special campaign launched by Frank Single at last Sunday's District Council Meeting. Here goes:

Since 2009 the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command, in association with Veterans Affairs and the Ladies Auxiliary, have been working together on operation "Leave the Streets Behind" to ensure that every Veteran who is homeless or near homeless finds the help they need to leave the streets behind.

Branch 197 recently launched their own campaign to raise money for a raffle that involves a signed hockey stick, Leaf's sweater and Hab's sweater signed by Johnny Bower and Dick Duff. The draw will be made by the two hockey veterans on April 21 at Branch 197, Acton at 3 p.m. All Proceeds to go to "Leave the Streets Behind". Let's all get involved and give a "hand up for Veterans". Contact Frank Single for details and ticket availability. The raffle has the full support of our District Command.

Branch 197 is now operating under winter hours and this week the season activities are starting up. Remember Mix Darts started on Tuesday, October 10. Ladies Darts is underway on Wednesday evenings, and the Men's Cribbage League Starts Thursday, October 12. Thursday afternoon Euchre and Friday evening Euchre are ongoing.

We are re-introducing the Friday Night Dinner and Dance beginning Friday, October 13. The frequency of this event will depend on your support.

Check the notices behind the bar for upcoming events.

Library introduces 'Food 4 Fines' program

By: Alex Hilson

Those who have gathered fines over the years from the Halton Hills Public Library will have a chance to be partially forgiven. The Halton Hills Public Library is introducing "Food 4 Fines", a new program taking place Sunday, October 15 to Saturday, October 21 during Ontario Public Library Week. Patrons will be able to bring a donation of non-perishable food items to a branch of the Halton Hills Public Library and in return be forgiven up to $20 of the total amount owing.

A release presented at Halton Hills Council said,"This program is designed to provide amnesty for patrons' overdue fines, while supporting the essential work of area food banks.

"The key message for Canadian Library Month and Week is, 'A Visit Will Get You Thinking'. We will play our part by enlightening citizens of this very real need in their community, and by providing a unique and easy way to help those less fortunate".

Donations presented at the Acton Branch will go towards the Acton Foodshare while donations presented in Georgetown will go towards the Georgetown Breadbasket.

Halton Hills Ward 1 Councillor Mike Albano, who was essential in instituting the program, said, "I'm thankful to the Library Board for approving the proposal. Close to Thanksgiving the need is great. Every donation helps."

Details are as follows:

- Patrons will be allowed to bring a donation of non-perishable items for the food bank once during the period.
- Up to $20 from their total amount owing will be forgiven.
- Patrons with no outstanding fines are welcome to 'pay it forward' by donating food. These gifts will be acknowledged by the library.
- A list of acceptable food items will be available at the front desk, and will be provided via in public signage throughout the community.

Male arrested after pointing gun at youths

A 19 year old male has been arrested in connection with an incident where an alleged firearm was pointed at three 13 year old girls in Georgetown.

At 5:25 p.m. on Thursday, October 5, Halton Police responded to a call involving a pointed firearm. Police learned that three 13 year old girls were walking along the Credit River in the Maple Avenue and 17 Side Road area of Georgetown. Along the way, the girls encountered a group of males. One of the males was observed to be in possession with what appeared to be a firearm. The firearm was pointed in the girls direction causing them to immediately flee the area. No one was injured in the incident.

The suspect was described as a white male, in his late teens, early twenties. He was approximately 5'7' with brown hair and a long goatee. He was wearing black pants, a black t-shirt and a black sweater. He had a tattoo of a teardrop under his left eye and various other tattoos on both of his hands. Uniform patrol officers quickly identified the suspect responsible.

In the early morning hours on October 6, Kenneth Gill of Georgetown was arrested, charged and held for bail.

Gill is facing one count of Possession of a Weapon for a Dangerous Purpose.

Police have not recovered any weapon and believe the firearm involved to be a pellet gun. The investigation is continuing.

Anyone who may have information about this investigation is asked to call Detective Derek Moyes of the Georgetown Criminal Investigation Bureau on 905-825-4747 extension 2114, Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), through the web at www.haltoncrimestoppers.com or by texting "tip201" with your message to 274637 (crimes).

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