

MSB graduates celebrate

By Frances Niblock

Giggly girls in gowns and nervous/shy boys tugging at ties said goodbye to McKenzie Smith Bennett School last Wednesday night at their Grade Eight graduation ceremony.

As proud parents and family jammed the gaily-decorated Legion in a standing-room-only crowd – most with cameras – the students trooped to the front to receive a handshake from Principal David Swanson and a certificate.

Swanson, who is leaving MSB after just one year, wished the students well on their path of life and learning, and confessed he was a little scared when his path of life brought him to Acton, so he knew how they felt to be moving on to Acton High School.

“Don’t worry – you’re going to be successful,” Swanson said, adding he hoped they had taught the grads four very important rules.

“Listen to everyone, respect everyone, include everyone and appreciate everyone,” Swanson said, signalling out five students for praise for working “with adults, who are difficult to work with sometimes, and with students who sometimes are difficult to work with, too.”

Those students include Dustin Headley who ran the school’s sound system, Amanda Dunlevy and Sheri Cunningham for their work on yearbook, and Craig Barney and Ellis Lavallee, new students to MSB in Grade Eight, who had successful years.

To the parents in the audience, Swanson had some words of advice.

“We prepare the path for our children, and not enough are we preparing our children for the path, and there is a very subtle difference,” he said, adding too often parents protect their kids when they should be preparing them to deal with an uncertain future.

Halton Hills Trustee Ethel Gardiner brought best wishes from the Halton District School Board, encouraging the students to take what they have taught and make good use of it in high school, and thanking the parents for “loving your kids” and for the support, patience and encouragement they give their kids on a daily basis.

“Students, I know your high school years will be interesting and challenging...remember that you will be called on every day

to make choices...please remember to make good choices,” Gardiner said.

Class Valedictorian, Kara De Vaan, invited the students to look back over their early years and be happy that they survived Grade Eight – including the tests, the trips to Ottawa and Wonderland and the teachers who she noted each had their own personal style and characteristics.

“It’s all the teachers that have helped us along the way – thank you. I wish you all the best in high school and throughout the years to come,” De Vaan said, urging her fellow students to enjoy their lives.

The MSB subject awards were received by: Math – Sangwon Bak; History – Taylor Buchanan; Geography – Tess Kennedy; English – Hayley Gendron; Science – Jessica Stokes; Visual Arts – Brianna Forbes; Core French – Torea McAfee; Music – Harrison Checchia; French Immersion – Emmaline Atherton; Health and Phys. Ed. – Steve Jansen.

The MSB Specialty Awards were received by: McKenzie-Smith Bennett Award – Leanne Kennedy and Kyle Bulstode; Attendance Award – Jessica Stokes and Caitlin Dagleish; Performing Arts Award – Taylor Bulstrode; Athletic Awards – Bradley Kri and Lauren Vermeulen; IODE Most Improved Award – Rob Kidd and Shannon Pickering; Highest Average – Katherine Watson; Eaton-Kent Award – Kieran Taylor and Lilreta Ladd; ETFO Male English Award – Kevin Hamilton; ETFO Female Math and Science Award – Emily Vickery; Principal’s Award – Cassandra Coker; Halton Student of Excellence – Katherine Watson.



ACE ACHIEVERS: Four graduating students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School received large school letters at their graduating ceremony last Wednesday at the Legion, signifying they had accumulated over 500 points in their time at MSB through involvement with athletics, academics and citizenship. They include, from left: Emmaline Atherton, Nicole Drumm, Katherine Watson and Emily Vickery. – Frances Niblock photo

Halton moves Social Services to new Hub at MSB school

By Frances Niblock

Halton Region is re-locating its social service Hub to an addition that will be built at the north end of McKenzie-Smith Bennett School.

For the past year the Hub, the centre for Halton’s new model of delivering one-stop social services to the community at school locations – has been at Robert Little School where Halton’s Director of Children’s Service, Mary Beth Jonz said they were sharing space.

“One of the requirements of the Best Start initiative is that new Hub space is created and it needs to have an attachment to child care. McKenzie-Smith Bennett had the child care centre, so the logistics of putting the Hub beside the child care centre made sense for moving forward with Best Start,” Jonz said on Friday.

She said initially the provincial Best Start funding was not in play, and they had no intention of building, so

they located the Hub at Robert Little School where they could share space.

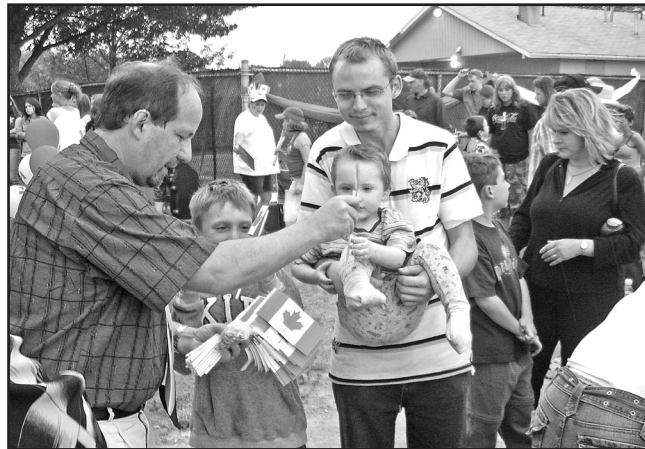
Jonz said regardless of the location of the Hub room, they would provide satellite service to Acton.

She said the size and cost of the addition to McKenzie-Smith Bennett School are not finalized, but it will be a classroom sized room beside the YMCA’s child care centre, built as part of the Our Kids initiative that is a partnership with both boards of education, Halton Police, Children’s Aid, Halton Child and Youth and Transitions for Youth. Groundbreaking is expected in August.

Halton’s revised Best Start program, using \$6.1-million in provincial funds, will be used to build or renovate two hubs in Milton and Burlington, and to build 200 new child care spaces.

Jonz said developing Hubs in each Halton municipality provided a chance to focus on Acton.

“This was an opportunity to give Acton a lot more attention and encourage other service providers to provide their services locally,” Jonz said.



FLAGS & FUN: Acton’s Nolan Jeffrey, 2, in the arms of his uncle Kevin Jeffrey accepts a Canada Day flag from Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette during Canada Day celebrations in Prospect Park on Saturday. – Frances Niblock photo

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