

## DARE program fueled by bug donation

By Howard Mozel

OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Halton's DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program has been bugged.

On Thursday, during the monthly Halton Regional Police Services Board meeting, a 2003 VW Beetle – decked out in full DARE regalia – was officially unveiled. Donated by Oakville Volkswagen president/owner Mark Seibert, the silver bug is already proving to be a hit with children.

"It's been in use for two weeks now and it's been an excellent ice-breaker for the kids," said Const. Derrick Marshall, who oversees the program in Oakville and has already received great feedback from students.

The DARE program, offered to all Grade 6 students in Halton by specially trained officers, provides children with the self esteem and will power to refuse offers of drugs and alcohol, options how to deal with the stress of peer pressure and the means to solve problems without resorting to violence.

"DARE is a program we've cherished," said Police Chief Ean Algar, who explained

that community support like Seibert's helps sustain this important initiative.

Such "tremendous participation," Algar continued, helps make Halton Regional Police a better service and the region a "better community."

For his part, Seibert said that as the father of two children, he's part of the community too and wanted to do something to help the program out.

"I felt this was perfect," said Seibert, who added that DARE deserves all the recognition it receives.

Const. Marshall, who explained that the Beetle will also be an attraction at special events, approached Seibert about the idea and since many Volkswagen dealerships across Ontario already support DARE, the donation was an easy sell. The car was ordered then completely decked out in familiar DARE logos, Halton Regional Police crest and the words DARE Bug across the front.

According to retired police Sergeant and current DARE Halton chair Joe Prasad, the program costs \$500,000 a year to run in the region so every donation is appreciated.

"A gift like this means so much. It really helps us," he said. "It links us to the community."



Barrie Erskine - Oakville Beaver

On hand for the donation of a 2003 Volkswagen Beetle by Oakville Volkswagen to Halton's DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program were (left to right) Halton Regional Police Service Board Chair Don Robinson, Halton DARE board member Suzanne Algar, Halton Regional Police Sgt. Gavin Haynes, Halton Regional Police Constable Derrick Marshall, Oakville Volkswagen president/owner Mark Seibert, and Halton Regional Police Chief Ean Algar.

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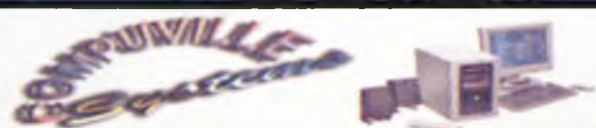
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