

North Halton Contact Centre . . . there when you need them

It's a typical midnight on a Saturday. For most people it's been a night out with some friends or a special friend. They've had some laughs and shared some good times. For most people it's been a good night.

For most people, but not everyone.

Somewhere in Georgetown in a one room office, a phone rings. A hand picks up the phone and a voice answers. "Hello, this is the North Halton Contact Centre, can I help you?"

It could be the voice of a man or a woman, an 18-year-old or a senior citizen. The identity of the voice is irrelevant. What matters is that a voice is there, when someone needs it, at any time of the day.

Twoservices The North Halton Contact Centre is a combination information and distress centre which is open 24 hours a day and covers the Milton, Acton and Georgetown areas.

The Free Press held an interview with a representative from the centre at the office in Georgetown. The interview was granted on the condition the location of the office and the name of the representative were not mentioned.

The representative was a woman who had joined the centre shortly after it was formed three years ago.

"We are the only service in Ontario that is a combination distress and information centre, operating 24 hours with no paid staff members," she said.

The calls range from a lonely person wanting to talk to someone with a sympathetic ear, to a mother wanting to know where she could find square dance

lessons for her daughter.

Plenty of information The centre has a complete file on all community services, an up-to-date community calendar and also keeps track of coming events through the local newspapers.

The distress calls are varied and the woman from the centre said they do get a few suicidal calls. Most of the calls are from lonely people, people with family troubles, alcohol problems, drug problems and almost any problem which people need to talk over with someone.

"We are here mainly to listen," she said. "A lot of times the people don't know how to solve their problems by themselves and we can refer them to people who can help."

She said the centre has ongoing training sessions with lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists and other professionals to make the staff better equipped to handle all types of calls.

"Talk positively" They teach us how to listen and how to refer callers to the proper source," she said. "You have to be able to talk positively on the phone and listen without aggravating the problem."

"We also have our regular callers," she said. "These are usually older people with no family who just want someone to talk with, to pass the time."

The calls to the centre are increasing at a rapid rate. In 1974 they received 1,239 calls, in 1975 this doubled to 2,706 and at the end of August of this year they had 3,335 calls.

The centre's files show a 50-50 split between distress and information calls with the majority of information calls coming in the daytime and

the distress calls coming at night.

"Around Christmas and spring we usually get an increase in distress calls," she said. "Also holiday weekends are busy for us, especially on Mondays when people realize they won't be going anywhere."

May add phone Currently, the Centre is equipped with only one incoming phone.

"Sometimes someone will phone and say they were trying to call but the phone was busy. How often this happens, we don't really know," she said. "If we do find that we need two phones we'll need two people in the office."

She thought this would probably mean doubling the current staff of around 65 volunteers. Each volunteer is expected to serve at least eight hours a month. Each day is broken down into four, four hour shifts and one eight hour shift over night. She said they are always looking for more volunteers.

Trains volunteers The Centre runs volunteer training programs each fall and spring. The fall training session begins tomorrow (Oct. 14) and all the trainees have been picked, but she said anyone interested should contact them so preliminary interviews and screening processes can be completed quickly for the spring training session.

No drugs, drink "We go mainly by the family concept and we won't take youths who are on drugs or who drink heavily," the woman said.

She said they work closely with Public Health departments, Children's Aid Society and other youth oriented groups.

"We've even had Children's Aid refer some of their youths to us after they've become too old to stay in Children's Aid," she said.

In its third year the Centre is becoming more accepted by the other professionals in the area. This has allowed the volunteers to work closer with them. Also many of the doctors and lawyers have volunteered their time to give on-going training.

Self-satisfying The woman from the centre found for herself that the work is satisfying.

"Most of the callers are sincere and want to be helped," she said. "We do get a few crank calls from kids who just heard about us, but they usually hang up quickly."

"Sometimes people will phone and thank us for helping them get through a crisis time," she said. "And that makes up for the times when you can't seem to do anything for them."

goodies don't last. Their work isn't effective and they aren't satisfied, so they end up quitting."

The woman from the Centre thought the training session not only helped people look at others, but at themselves.

"You start to look closer at yourself and find your own faults," she said. "You end up realizing you're not as fantastic as you thought."

Homes for youths In addition to running the phone-in services the Centre also operates a youth housing program which works with youths over 16 who need to move out of the home because of problems in the family.

Currently only one youth is in the program but when it first started, eight youths were involved.

"When we first began it we had 41 calls from youths, but the program is not just an easy way to get out of the house," said another woman who is closely involved with the youth program.

She explained before any youth is accepted a number of interviews are held to determine if there is any possibility of the youth staying at home. If the youth is accepted into the program he is transferred to a volunteer family. The youth must follow the rules set by the volunteer family.

CAS week The week of Oct. 17 to 24 has officially been designated Children's Aid Week throughout Ontario and the theme "Helping Families Is Our Business" has been adopted to inform the public about the vast number of resources local CAS agencies have for helping families in trouble.

The most pressing needs facing the Halton CAS are the dramatic numbers of teenagers coming into care, the lack of foster and boarding

homes and the province's stringent budgetary restrictions, said spokesman Joan Lee.

CAS officials are pleased to talk about how the agency is coping with these important aspects of its work. As well, the agency is anxious that people in the community are informed about the many CAS services which are as close to people in need as the telephone.



CAREFULLY SQUEEZING THE decorating icing on the cake, Ruth Kranendonk makes sure all her lines are straight at the cake decorating course held at the high school night school courses.

CAS week

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buildings for horses

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Legion ladies donate money

by Fern Schullts \$1,000 was donated to the Minor Sports and \$2,000 to Branch 197 at the October meeting of the Legion Ladies Auxiliary.

The Auxiliary has lost two of their older members this month, Hazel Cripps with 28 years and Mammie Allen with ten.

Comrade Grace Agnew is out and around again, Louise Toth is home from hospital and let's hope everyone keeps well and happy for the winter months.

Let's have everyone out donating to the Bazaar Saturday, and there's banquet after banquet coming up, so if you have time on your hands we can sure use it.

We are planning a Christmas bus trip for shopping, everyone interested be out at November meeting. The zone euvre was a great success, thanks to all those who made salads and brought sandwiches. See you at October-fest.

\$450 damage

In a collision at the corner of Young and Eastern Oct. 18, about \$450 damage resulted to the two vehicles involved. Drivers were Robert Spiers, 15 Sideroad, Milton and Ronald Anderson, Dorchester.

FRI., SAT., SUN.,
OCTOBER 22-23-24
3 SEXCITING HITS

- ① Head Mistress
- ② Brand of Shame
- ③ Pornography and Prostitution in the Orient

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ONE OF THE VOLUNTEERS at the North Halton Contact Centre listens to an anonymous phone caller and tries to provide some help. On her left is a second phone which is used for outgoing calls only and a wheel file which serves as the centre's community directory. The centre is the only one in Ontario to handle both information and distress calls 24 hours a day with only volunteer staff members.

WI board plans District Annual

The fall board meeting of the Halton District Women's Institute was held on Tuesday, Oct. 5, with the president, Mrs. Glen Campbell in the chair. Eighteen ladies were present.

A copy of the poem written by Mrs. L. Dixon, Mt. Union Branch, was given to each branch present.

Miss L. Holding, Home Economist, reported on the 4-H Fruit Project and the coming Clothes for Leisure Project.

A District Day was planned for Tuesday, Nov. 2 at 12.45 at the Hillcrest United Church Trafalgar Rd., Hornby. It was planned as a historical day and dessert luncheon. The branches are to bring their Tweedsmuir history and scrap books, also a photo

album, old pictures and books. Silverwood Branch is to act as hostess and each branch will provide dessert enough for their members. The W.I. signs will be on display at this afternoon.

Plans were begun for the 1977 District Annual, to be held in Georgetown with Ballinafad and Limehouse branches acting as hosts, on Tuesday, May 17, 1977. The competition for the District Annual will be a plate of seven butter tarts with raisins and a plate of seven plain tea biscuits. The nominating committee will be Ashgrove, Ballinafad, and Bannockburn branches.

The secretary was instructed to contact the Milton Fall Fair Board in regard to the W.I. exhibits. The directors were to discuss suit-

able memorial for Dr. Ethel Chapman with their branches and report back to the district at the spring board meeting. If any branches are ready to have their Tweedsmuir Histories microfilmed, they are to get in touch with the district curator, Mrs. Robertson, immediately.

Investigation of the village signs is still being carried on.

Charged

An Acton man and a Limehouse man were charged by police when they were found in possession of suspected marijuana the past week.

Birds harvest seed too soon

If the birds would wait until after harvest, growing bird seed would be a more attractive venture for Canadian farmers.

But as it is, only a few farmers grow sorghum and millet, major ingredients in bird seed. Freeloading birds harvest as much as half the crop in some areas. The demand for wild bird seed in Canada is high and 372,000 pounds of sorghum seed and 600,000 pounds of millet were imported from the United States in 1975.

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What next . . .

Local Milton car dealer adds new twist to car selling . . .

Trafalgar Motors of 409 Main Street, Milton is "Blitz" discounting all of its used car stock up to six dollars an hour to the maximum of fifty seven hours for a total discount of three hundred and forty-two dollars.

Chuck Beeton and his boys just have to make room for new stock coming in, as a result they are promoting an hourly discount BLITZ on their entire used car stock. Here's how it works. If the regular retail price of a car is \$1295.00 and the hourly BLITZ discount is \$6.00 per hour, a buyer (no matter when he

makes his purchase as long as he delays taking delivery until 6 p.m. Saturday October 23rd / 76 may lay claim to his full fifty seven hour BLITZ discount) if that discount was \$6.00 per hour he

would multiply that by the maximum fifty seven hours and come up with a whopping \$342.00 saving. Every car is clearly marked giving regular retail price and the hourly BLITZ discount. We

invite you to browse through our lot at 409 Main Street, Milton or give us a call at 878-2369 for complete particulars. Blitz discount sale starts 9 a.m. Thursday, October 21, 1976.