

Local children can be fingerprinted Nov. 17

It takes only 10 minutes but it may save your child's life. It is the Child Identification Program in which children are photographed and fingerprinted on a special information card.

If a child goes missing, the first 24 hours are critical to get out as much information on that child in as wide an area as possible, according to Brenda Appleby, chair of Town Two Civitan Club of Oakville which sponsors the program.

"It's not a deterrent," says Appleby. "It's just going to help parents if the child goes missing."

The information card shows the child's photo, fingerprints, parents', doctor's and dentist's addresses as well as the child's physical description including blood type and identifying marks. If the child is under one year old, footprints are taken instead of fingerprints. The card, the only copy, is kept by the parents in a safe place.

The club members have been trained by the Halton Regional Police Force in the aspects of fingerprinting and they have the endorsement of the Halton and Ontario Provincial Police, Appleby says. Since the 22 Civitan Clubs across Ontario started the program last year over 20,000 children have

been fingerprinted. These information charts, particularly the fingerprints are very important, says Barbara Snider, the vice-president of the Ontario branch of Child Find which is an international organization set up to help locate missing children.

The first thing deranged people will do once they have kidnapped children is alter the child's looks, she says. For example, a little blond-haired girl will suddenly become a black-haired boy and a child under three can also change dramatically through growth. If the child is found later, the parents may not know it is their child and

the fingerprints will be the only way to identify the child.

Snider says there are eight children currently missing for the past 15 years in Halton but "there are no statistics on missing children in Ontario."

The public is becoming aware of reports of missing children more and more, says Doug Magwood, principal of Joseph Gibbons and Limehouse public schools. Magwood thinks the Child Identification Program is such a good idea that he has sent memos to parents of all his students urging them to take their child to the program which will be held Nov. 17 at the Gordon

Alcott Arena. Although Magwood is not a member of the Civitan Club he has volunteered his time to help out on Saturday.

Magwood added the Child Identification Program is not just for little children and parents should also take their teenagers too. Appleby agrees saying the number of young girls disappearing after working at night has been increasing.

The Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department will be hosts for the Oakville Town Two Civitan Club Nov. 17 at the Gordon Alcott Arena, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

It takes only 10 minutes.



newsmakers

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Board of Education

Classrooms closed to save Board money

In an effort to save money, the Halton Board of Education will be closing 27 elementary classrooms in Halton Hills this school year.

According to Jerry Jenkins, superintendent of business service, savings will be made in utilities and caretaking time adding up to \$650 to \$700 per classroom. In comparison to the Halton board's budget, he said, one room closure does not seem to represent major savings but in addition to 91 other room closures, it can add up to a yearly accumulative savings for the school board.

The Halton Board of Education is aiming for the future when sections of school can be closed off, then the money can really be saved, trustee Bill Priestner said.

Besides the 27 Halton Hills classroom closures, 13 classrooms in the Oakville area and 52 classrooms in Burlington will also be closed.

The schools affected in Halton Hills are: George Kennedy (five classrooms), Joseph Gibbons (four), M.Z. Bennett (three), Pineview (four), Glen Williams (two), Harrison (two), Wrigglesworth (two), McKenzie-Smith (one), Speyside (two) and Park (two).

The majority of these rooms are currently empty and for the ones that are being used for students' programs, time will be given to

accommodate the students in other available rooms, Jenkins said.

"I don't believe any program will be seriously disrupted," he said.

Superintendent of Halton Hills School, Ron Chapman said a natural time to close the rooms will be during the Christmas break so there will not be any great effect on programs.

The closures are based on a functional rated capacity report presented to the trustees last month and discussions with superintendents of the schools.

According to the report, only 64.8 per cent of George Kennedy school's classrooms are used by students, 30 per cent at Joseph Gibbons school, 58.2 per cent at M.Z. Bennett school and 39.2 per cent at Pineview school.

Although only an average 68 per cent of all Halton Hills classrooms are used by students, some rooms remained open because they are being used for other reasons. Seventeen rooms were needed to accommodate the increase in French immersion classes and approximately 54 rooms are being used by either the community or the administration.

Jenkins said there will be no immediate lay offs in the caretaking staff and he expects any reduction in staff will be done by attrition.

New elderly services launched by Region

A massive, multi-faced plan to take care of Halton's senior citizens in coming decades has been launched—minus a statistical data base that some believe is integral to the plan's success.

Regional council last Wednesday committed itself to spending almost \$58,000 next year in initial funding for a variety of programs aimed at coping with the ever-increasing demand for social services among Halton's burgeoning elderly population.

Council stopped short, however, of spending another \$12,500 next year on a statistical information centre to provide seniors with full, up-to-date data on services available to them.

By a 12-10 recorded vote, council left further consideration of the data base to a planned elderly services advisory committee, even though Burlington Councillor Walter Mulkewich pointed out that it is a major cog in the overall mechanism.

Debate over the data base dragged on after Mulkewich raised the spectre of Ethiopia's starving millions to underline the need for adequate long-range planning.

"If this debate goes on any longer, I'll have to declare a conflict of interest," joked a "rapidly aging" Councillor Bill Johnson of Milton.

Approved by council last week:

—formation of an elderly services advisory committee, with terms of reference still to come, comprised of single representatives of the District Health Council, Social Planning Council, Housing Authority, area hospitals, rest homes, charitable homes for the aged, Sheridan College's gerontology program, chambers of commerce, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, two citizens at large and two Regional

councillors:

—development of an elderly services consumer and professional awareness program, including a \$7,000 per year updating of a seniors' service directory and a \$1,000 family and resident orientation program for 1875, and the investigation and implementation, if feasible, of a special telephone information number;

—further consideration of a \$7,000 publicity program on seniors' services for 1875;

—continued support for the Provincially-funded elderly assessment and placement service;

—hiring of a \$25,860 per year elderly services co-ordinator with contracted clerical staff, provided the Province share the cost;

—a pilot program \$1,000 to extend the range and use of the Manor bus serving Halton's central home for the aged in Milton;

—a \$15,000 engineering feasibility survey and development of a site plan for Halton Centennial Manor, representing the Region's share in the cost of a major upgrading project to be partially financed by the Province;

—a \$1,000 work program aimed at altering responsibility for operating homes for the aged so the Region can provide satellite homes on a contractual or private basis.

On staff's advice, council has shelved further consideration of a taxi fare assistance program for the elderly until the first part of its planned transportation study for the disabled is completed. The Region hopes to one day offer financial aid through the General Welfare Assistance Act to seniors needing taxis to get around their community.



These lucky hunters took full advantage of the Halton deer hunting season this week and came back with four bucks and a doe. The hunters are from left to right Giordano Buna, Pete Buna, Bill Sheppard, Turk Sheppard, Robert Cadeaux and Murray Hurgott.

Well-being of children . . .

. . . is central concern

Report suggests how to protect them

By JANE MULLER

An investigation into a "highly hidden and pervasive tragedy" shows it could remain as Dr. Robin Badgley described it unless certain steps are taken.

A two-year study into child sexual abuse, juvenile prostitution and child pornography which resulted in a 1,300 page report was outlined by one of its authors. Dr. Badgley, chairman of the nine-member study committee, highlighted several of the report's 52 recommendations at a meeting last Monday evening.

"Our central concern was with the well-being of the child," Dr. Badgley explained.

The victims of sexual abuse are scarred and live with feelings of "uncertainty, fear and despair", according to the committee chairman. Findings showed about one in four women and one in 10 men are victims of unwanted sexual acts of a serious nature as children. Virtually all assailants are male and in the majority of cases are family members or in a position of trust.

Dr. Badgley is understandably concerned that the recommendations are followed-up and to that end, stressed the importance of establishing the office of Commissioner. This person "would help serve as a catalyst for restructuring of services." The Commissioner would provide a central focus and coordinate government departments at the federal, provincial and municipal level.

Second on his list of priority suggestions was educating children to enable them to protect themselves from these crimes and know who to go for help. Dr. Badgley admitted he doesn't know details of programs already in place in Canada when asked by Peter Abbott, a Halton Board of Education Trustee.

Mr. Abbott was one of five people representing various segments of the community who made up a panel. Each were allowed one question and Mr. Abbott's concerned programs like the one his board is considering in curriculum. Dr. Badgley indicated such an initiative is unusual although something he considers necessary.

"We need to teach children the distinction between what is good and acceptable and what is bad and unacceptable," Mr. Badgley said.

The final segment of the evening gave the audience an opportunity to question Dr. Badgley. At least one questioned the effects of this type of education, fearing that children might become paranoid.

"We need to balance fear with self protection," the speaker replied.

Information gathered from more than 10,000 children across Canada indicated one point clearly, according to Dr. Badgley.

"They wished they'd had better information. They wished they'd know more about what was happening to them and who to turn to for help," he said.

Panel member James Sherlock, Halton Roman Catholic School Board trustee wanted to know Dr. Badgley's view of recent debate centring on censoring films and "freedom of artistic expression."

"We regard child pornography as a direct form of child sexual abuse. There is a permanent record made of that child," Dr. Badgley said.

He recommends a "determined and coordinated national effort" to control child pornography which in his words involves the depiction of a crime. Dr. Badgley is hopeful the study will heighten public awareness of child pornography.

The study calls for changes in the Criminal Code where it relates to sexual offences against children. The nature of association between the offender and victim, use of threats, youthfulness of the child and the extent of injuries should figure in the definition of unacceptable sexual behaviour.

The study committee looked at 24 sections of the Criminal Code which cover sexual offences against children and found some "archaic" terms. The word "chaste" for example is still used in reference to the child's personal history. A similar reference was removed from the laws covering sexual abuse when they were revised last year.

The length of time the judicial system takes to process cases and the resulting stress on the family was a concern raised by panel member Paul Bennett, a therapist with C.O.H.R. and the Halton Sexual Abuse Treatment Program.

"I'm concerned about the family being victimized by the system," he told Dr. Badgley.

The committee chairman responded by saying the committee's principle concern was to ensure the protection of the young child and put other considerations "at a secondary level."

Dr. Badgley pointed out strangers who are perpetrators are dealt with more sternly than those in a position of trust. This a problem which represents only a part of the

picture. Not only does the report recommend changes in laws it notes practices of recording incidents of abuse and assessment of cases must be improved.

"There is a need for the evidence given by children to be considered as trustworthy as an adult's, according to Dr. Badgley. A question submitted by a member of the audience related to the number of times a child must tell about an incident. Dr. Badgley estimated a child could be made to repeat a disclosure as many as seven times during the existing process.

The two legal systems involved including the Criminal and civil courts result in a child being interviewed by police, at least one social worker, the Crown and lawyers.

"The two systems are in conflict. Very rarely does a victim feel the court system has helped him," explained Dr. Badgley.

Ron Coupland, executive director of Halton Children's Aid Society and panel member, wondered what those in the field of children's services could do to meet the needs outlined in the study. More complete assessment was the speaker's response.

The "shelf life" of the report was also questioned by Mr. Coupland who was told it would depend on meetings like the one last Monday.

"We're now at the fulcrum of community action," said Dr. Badgley.

Although he said he feels we can be quietly optimistic about overcoming some problems, one member of the audience was concerned about the federal government's record of action. Only five per cent of report recommendations are implemented, according to the questioner.

"It is apparent the government will react to the extent there is a strongly expressed community concern," suggested Dr. Badgley.

The federal departments of justice and health and welfare have been briefed on the report, according to Dr. Badgley. He admitted it is "unlikely the upcoming session of parliament will deal with the recommendations."



The Halton Hills Arts Council has donated \$2,000 to Georgetown's University Women's Club Scholarship Fund for Acton and Georgetown high schools. Left to right is Ralph Ursal and Eunice McGowan of the Halton Hills Arts Council, Christine Macowan, president of the Club, Mary McEwen, secretary-treasurer of the Scholarship Fund, and Ruth McMulkin, president of the Scholarship Fund.

Computer age meter reading likely

The Halton Hills Hydro Commission is in the black again this month, it was revealed at the monthly commission meeting Friday.

Hydro expenditures totaled \$1,118,481.84, while revenues tallied \$1,124,186.14, leaving a net profit of \$5,704.

Halton Hills Hydro may be entering the computer age for meter reading.

The local commission, after reading correspondence from the Mississauga Hydro Commission, decided to keep tabs on a new

method of meter reading involving a small, hand-held Utilicorder currently in use in Mississauga.

The Utilicorder, which can be used for reading hydro, gas and water meters, should save time and money, hydro commission chairman Murt Allison said.

A built-in warning system will also alert meter readers to any errors, and recordings in a small disk inside the Utilicorder can be easily transferred to a main computer at local hydro offices.