

Help Haiti

If there is a more star-crossed nation on Earth than Haiti, we're at a loss to name that country.

Be it from decades of political unrest and corruption, rampant poverty, hurricanes, tropical storms or landslides, Haitians have had to endure more than their fair share of strife and anguish.

Now the island nation has been hit by a devastating earthquake that will see thousands, possibly more than 100,000, left dead by the wrath of Mother Nature.

For some local Halton Hills residents the disaster in Haiti hits close to home.

Eric Doubt, executive director of Healing Hands for Haiti International, a charitable organization which provides medicine and rehabilitation for 800,000 Haitians with disabilities, has spent much of the past two days trying to get information on the 46 residents who work at the group's headquarters in Port-Au-Prince.

Camille Otum, who along with fellow Georgetown resident Audrey Hoekstra and Brampton friend Era Ferron, opened the Welcome Home Children's Orphanage in Cabaret last year, is also desperately trying to get in touch with friends and relatives.

Both groups, along with the Canadian Salvation Army, Walmart stores, Canadian Red Cross and, likely in the days to come, other groups and associations, are spearheading fundraising campaigns to help Haiti in its time of need.

Nations around the world are rushing supplies and emergency crews to the Caribbean island in a effort to offer vital life-saving expertise and help.

We urge everyone to make a donation to any charitable organization operating a Haiti earthquake disaster relief fund.

Details on how to make a donation to some of the groups listed above can be found on page 9 of today's edition or by contacting any of the groups directly.

Haiti needs the world's help.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

E-mail: jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

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The Independent & Free Press

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Steve Nease

905-873-0301
Publisher: Ken Nugent
General manager: Steve Foreman (sforeman@independentfreepress.com)
Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell (ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)
Managing editor: John McGhie (jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)
Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler (ngeissler@independentfreepress.com)
Classifieds
 Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)
Accounting
 Rose Marie Gauthier
Editorial
 Cynthia Gamble: News editor (cgamble@independentfreepress.com)
 Ted Brown: Photography (tbrown@independentfreepress.com)
 Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer (ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports (emaher@independentfreepress.com)

WEB POLL RESULTS

How do you view the use of full-body scanners at airports?

- If it makes air travel safer I have no problem with using scanners (92%)
- I consider the use of scanners an invasion of privacy (8%)

Go to www.independentfreepress.com

Letters to the editor

North Halton may be better off on its own

Dear editor,
 Through the recent Natural Heritage System decision at Regional council, rural residents have been reminded once again that rural-oriented north Halton has very little in common with the urban south.

Many thousands of man-hours have been spent by north Halton people in public meetings, reading Region documents, discussion and responding to Region proposals. With the NHS battle settled, more time must be spent to digest the many pages of planner-speak that will regulate rural lives and property.

Perhaps all of that north Halton time and energy would have been better spent organizing a project to exit Halton Region.

The rural-oriented north could then be governed by a council of peers with similar interests and an understanding of the area. The "quality of life" folks and environmental zealots in the urban south would be left to squabble among themselves over the shape of their

urban utopia, or search for new targets to dominate.

Gary Ellis,
 Milton

Coverage helped

Dear editor,
 Thanks to the support of *The Independent & Free Press* and the Halton Hills community the spirit of giving came a little early this past holiday season.

It is clear that community papers such as *The Independent & Free Press* continue to be an excellent source for residents to learn of news, whether good or bad.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton recently set about trying to raise awareness that the agency is in dire need of Big Brothers in Georgetown for a few of its mentoring programs. Thanks to our local paper, the agency managed to attract quite a lot of attention from prospective volunteer mentors.

While there continues to be a waiting list of young boys eager to be matched with a Big Brother, those community-minded people who recently put their names forth to mentor a child will go a long way to reducing that list.

Clearly the spirit of giving is

alive and well in Halton Hills.

Wendy Somerville
 Co-ordinator of Volunteers
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton

Relay was a thrill

Dear editor,
 I want to extend a huge thank you to the people of Acton for making the Olympic torch run such a memorable experience.

I was lucky enough to run a portion of the relay in Acton, and having recently moved from Hillsburgh to Mississauga, many of my friends and family came out to watch. The warmth and support of everyone during my run was overwhelming, and I felt truly proud and honoured to carry the flame for everyone watching.

The people working on the torch relay team mentioned that the turnout in Acton was one of the best that they had seen in small town Ontario, and I can believe it.

A special thanks to Frank Prospero for his tireless work behind the scenes to make December 19 such a success. Thank you again.

Paul Nieuwland,
 Mississauga