

# Locals fear for Haitian friends

Continued from pg. 1

The organization has more than 300 medical volunteers from across North America to draw upon and as of Wednesday had received numerous offers from volunteers and donations at its website ([www.healinghandsforhaiti.org](http://www.healinghandsforhaiti.org)).

The most recent mission to Haiti included Doubt and his son Travis and Karen McKenzie-Stepner, also of Georgetown, and her son Daniel in November. No one locally is currently in Haiti with Healing Hands.

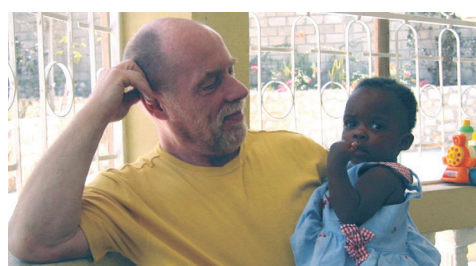
Also worried and eagerly awaiting news is Georgetown resident Camille Otum, who with Audrey Hoekstra, also of Georgetown, and Era Ferron of Brampton, opened the Welcome Home Children's Centre (orphanage) in Cabaret, Haiti last year. The orphanage, located about 50 miles from Port-Au-Prince, is currently home to 13 Haitian children.

"I am unable to get in touch with anyone in Haiti," said Otum.

She has tried to reach their agent in Port-Au-Prince and has only got his answering machine. The phone doesn't ring at the orphanage, she said. She has also been unable to reach her 80-year-old blind aunt who lives in Cabaret.

Both Healing Hands for Haiti and Welcome Home Children's Centre are accepting monetary donations.

To donate to Healing Hands for Haiti



Eric Doubt, executive director of Healing Hands for Haiti, with Haitian youngster Martine during a recent visit to the Caribbean nation. Submitted photo

visit [www.healinghandsforhaiti.org](http://www.healinghandsforhaiti.org), e-mail Doubt at [eric@commassoc.ca](mailto:eric@commassoc.ca) or call 905-702-9964. To donate to Welcome Home Children's Centre visit [www.welcomhomechildren.org](http://www.welcomhomechildren.org) or call Otum at 905-873-9963 or Hoekstra 905-877-0630.

Donations for Haiti earthquake victims can also be made to the Red Cross or Salvation Army. To donate to the Red Cross drop into the North Halton office at 100 Nipissing Rd., Unit 5, Milton, ON, L9T 5B2, call 905-875-1459, or mail a cheque to that address. Specify the donation is for victims of the Haiti earthquake. Donations can be made online at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca).

Financial contributions can also be made to the Salvation Army by calling 1-800-SAL-ARMY (725-2769), by visiting [www.SalvationArmy.ca](http://www.SalvationArmy.ca), by mailing donations to The Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters, Canada and Bermuda, 2 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M4H 1P4, or dropping off donations at any Salvation Army unit. Donors should specify their gift is to the Haiti Earthquake Disaster Relief Fund.

# Seniors seek more funding from budget committee

By CYNTHIA GAMBLE  
Staff Writer

Georgetown Seniors' Centre president John Daley was the only member of the public who addressed the Halton Hills budget committee on Delegation Night, Tuesday.

The evening was set aside for the public to bring concerns to the committee (all members of council) before it begins discussions on the 2010 operating budget.

Town Treasurer Ed DeSousa reported that the starting point for the 2010 budget is slightly more than \$28.5M— a 4.9 per cent increase over last year's budget. Combined with Halton Region and Education taxes (both zero per cent increases), the overall tax impact will be 1.8 per cent. For property owners that translates into an \$18 increase for every \$100,000 of assessment.

DeSousa added that maintains the existing service levels with slight improvements in some areas such as the addition of crossing guards and snow removal on Mountainview Rd. and

some park pathways.

Daley, who was speaking on behalf of the town's two seniors' centres— Acton and Georgetown— urged the committee to set aside more money for seniors' staffing.

Daley said low staffing levels has been a concern for a number of years and is well below the provincial average. He said volunteers who usually picked up the slack are now dwindling due to other commitments, age and ill health.

When the budget discussion begins in earnest on Monday, budget committee members will debate a staff report recommending \$64,000 in provincial funding be allocated to new staff

for the centres. The decision will have no impact on the tax levy.

DeSousa pointed out to budget committee members the Town budget increase is comparable to tax increases in Milton (4.3%), Oakville (4.5%) and Burlington (4.9%).

Budget discussions will be held on Monday, Jan. 18 and Jan. 19, 6 p.m. in the council chambers. Council ratification is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 25.



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