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DREAM SOON A REALITY

A recent grant has pushed the Field of Dreams project closer to reality

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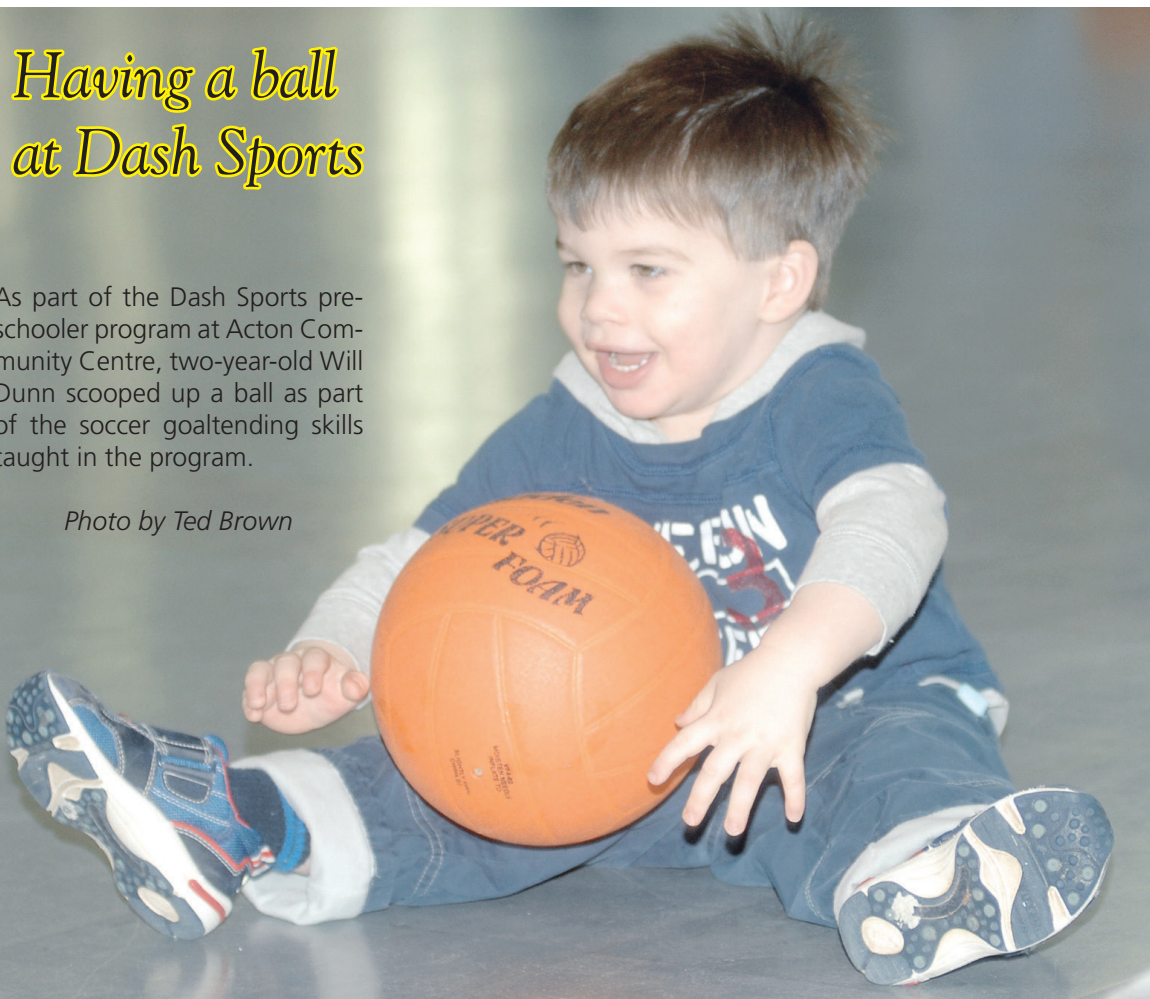
THURSDAY,
 January 21, 2010

Halton Hills' award-winning newspaper

Having a ball at Dash Sports

As part of the Dash Sports preschooler program at Acton Community Centre, two-year-old Will Dunn scooped up a ball as part of the soccer goaltending skills taught in the program.

Photo by Ted Brown



Council likely to okay 4.9% budget hike

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
 Staff Writer

The average property owner in Halton Hills will spend \$58 more on their municipal tax bills in 2010.

Halton Hills budget committee (all members of council) approved the 2010 operating budget of \$28,509,400 on Monday night. Council is expected to ratify the budget at their Jan. 25 meeting.

Little debate occurred on the budget, with most of the work being done by staff over the last five months.

The Town budget is 4.9 per cent more than last year's, but combined with Halton Region's and education taxes— both with no increases— the overall tax impact is 1.7 per cent. For easier calculation for homeowners that equates to an \$18 increase— \$1,052/\$100,000 of property assessment.

For example, the 2010 tax bill for the average Halton Hills property owner with a home assessed at \$320,000 would be \$3,366— up \$58.

"People might say it is not a good year (for an increase), wait for a better time," said Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson. "This is my 15th year here— there's never a good year for increasing the

budget or not.... Yes, it will impact some people, but it's better to do a small amount every year to keep our services at a level people expect and rely on than try to cut things out and end up farther and farther behind."

Johnson remembers the years of zero budget hikes— and the ones that followed when the catch-up to repair deteriorating services and infrastructure was very difficult.

Wards 3&4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal called it a responsible budget.

"There's never a good time to come in at 4.9 per cent but maybe this is a good time, because it is offset by both the Region and education taxes coming in at zero. So overall people's tax bill goes up 1.7 per cent, which is around inflation. Our budget has been cut to the bone ... it's a very responsible budget," she said.

However, Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis provided a dissenting voice, saying this budget goes beyond just maintaining existing services.

"I would have preferred that we had maintained the cost of living all the way across the board," he said. "I think it would have been easier for the public and particularly the public I represent."

See **BASE**, pg. 3

New smoking ban takes effect Feb. 15

By **TIM FORAN**
 Metroland Media Group

Family Day is the day parents in Halton will have to butt out in front of public hockey arenas.

A ban on smoking within nine metres, or about 30 feet, of hockey arenas, pools, libraries and other municipal facilities will kick in on Feb. 15.

The prohibition applies to all buildings owned or leased by Halton Region or the lower-tier mu-

nicipalities of Halton Hills, Burlington, Milton and Oakville.

Along with recreation facilities, the list also includes municipal offices, community centres, museums, art galleries, police stations, fire halls, ambulance stations and public washrooms. It would impact about 150 municipal facilities, according to Regional staff.

See **TOUGHER**, pg. 9

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