

Community rallies behind Field of Dreams project with open wallets

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

Halton District School Board (HDSB) has approved the naming of the new track and field at Georgetown District High School to recognize the contribution of the Georgetown Kiwanis Club to the Field of Dreams project.

The whole complex will be called the Kiwanis Field. The agreement will be signed on Friday, June 18 in conjunction with a donor recognition event 9:30 a.m. at Georgetown District High School.

The decision was made at recent board meeting after the approval of an agreement between Town of Halton Hills and HDSB on the financing of the \$2.1 million all-weather track and artificial turf field.

That approval was conditional on the Field of Dreams committee raising at least \$500,000 in community donations.

They did. They raised \$620,000.

"At a time when the world was talking recession and everyone was tightening their belts, our community opened up its wallets, and lent us its energy to allow us to quickly reach and now surpass our fundraising goal of \$500,000," said Alice Strachan, president of the Georgetown Soccer Club, one of the committee's founding members. "We were joined by both corporate business, not-for-profit and community service groups who all believed what we did, that Field of Dreams would, and should, become a reality and GDHS needed to be its home."

"It has been an amazing community process," she said. "It is a big community thank you that we would like to express. We dreamed it, the community supported it and now the bulldozers have arrived. This is an outstanding model of partnership and community support and we are so fortunate to live in such a supportive community."

The committee has raised a total of \$620,000 through



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pledges and fundraising events plus the addition of \$300,000 capital budget contribution from the HDSB—money that had already been planned for the revitalization of the old field.

Pledging money are:

- Kiwanis Club, \$80,000
- Kiwanis Club, field naming rights, \$80,000
- Georgetown Soccer Club, \$100,000
- Dufferin Aggregates, \$150,000
- Saputo (Neilson Dairy), \$30,000
- Lions Club, \$1,500
- Bank of Nova Scotia, \$5,000
- Caledon Labs, \$2,500
- Johnson Associates, \$25,000

- Ontario government Trillium grant, \$110,000
- Halton Football, \$15,000
- Georgetown Runners, \$1,000
- GDHS golf tournament 2009, \$8,242
- Feet in Motion, \$3,500
- Geezers Golf - Synergy Benefits, \$440
- Class of 73, \$1,700
- Local businesses, \$2,705
- Local clubs, \$225
- GDHS parents (and other individuals), \$1,950

"I can sum up the fundraising— an overwhelming response," said Jim Kardash, president of the Halton Hills Minor Football Association, adding the fundraising success of the Field of Dreams project could serve as a model for future community endeavours.

"This is a win-win-win project (for the community, for the Town and for the school)," he said. "Rather than coming with hands out, we came and said 'this is a plan and we'll get everyone involved'."

HDSB has secured a 20-year loan of \$1.47 million to be paid back over a 20-year period through the Town's rentals of the field. The 5.86 % interest rate has been secured for the full term of the loan, said Town Recreation and Parks director Terry Alyman, but the loan may be renegotiated in the 10-12 years time, when the turf requires replacement.

Both the Georgetown Soccer Club and Halton Hills Minor Football Association have agreed to a minimum number of rental hours at a \$150/hour rate for the next 20 years, generating the \$132,600 to pay the annual cost of the loan.

Georgetown Soccer Club will book a minimum of 684 hours, costing the club \$102,600 while the football club will take 200 hours, costing \$30,000. Both clubs will get priority booking on the field. HDSB board has also agreed to give up its bumping rights for use of the track and field, and instead outside school hours (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) would be required to pay the \$150/hour rental fee.

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