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'Gadget guy's' leaf packer could be money in the bag

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

When his son Liandro grew too big to jump inside a yard waste bag and compact leaves down into it, Manolo de Leon began thinking of an alternative plan to efficiently clean his lawn.

The 48-year-old Georgetown resident did a lot of experimenting to come up with something that would make collecting leaves easier and cut down on the number of bags brought out to the curb.

He came up with the Leaf-Factor, a hand-held, free-standing tool that weighs about two pounds and looks like a curling broom, except it has a serrated base that breaks down the volume of dried leaves and twigs. The one metre-high pole also has two clips at the top of the handle to attach yard waste bags so they don't fall over or blow away.

de Leon took a prototype of his idea to a trade show in Toronto a year ago and it was named its 2010 Trend of the Year, then had similar

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When his son became too big to climb into the recycling bag and pack down the leaves, Manolo de Leon came up with the idea of the Leaf-Factor, a garden tool that's becoming very popular.
Photo by Eamonn Maher

Health committee gets update on action plan

By **CHRISTINA COMMISSO**
Metroland Media Group

This summer Halton's 21-member council was tasked with addressing about two dozen key priority areas that residents deemed of the utmost importance— everything from property taxes to public health to road projects.

Last week, councillors were given an update on their progress and shortcomings during a series of updates on the 2011-2014 Citizen's Priorities Action Plan.

"When we went out to the public, one of the things we heard was they wanted to move from planning to action," said Rick Cockfield, Halton's director of strategic planning. "They wanted to see progress on the things that mattered to them."

Last Tuesday, the health and social services committee gathered for an action plan update. Some of the highlights include:

- **Online prenatal education:** Births in Halton have increased 50 per cent since the '90s, according to Halton's health officer Dr. Bob Nosal. Because of longer wait lists for prenatal classes, the Region began offering an online program in July, with 54 residents to date signing up. Since then there has been no wait list for the class.

- **Mental Health:** The Region is in the process of piloting a new mental health action plan that was produced with Halton's school boards. Part of the plan includes having a mental health liaison nurse in the schools and mental health resources for teachers.

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