

EDITORIAL

with Frances Learment

Social issues champion needed

Ten Halton Hills food bank clients only accept food that doesn't have to be cooked because they live in their cars and have no way to heat anything.

The widening chasm between the haves and have-nots right here in Acton and Georgetown was underscored last Thursday at the launch of *Imagine Halton Hills*, a draft sustainability strategy for economic prosperity, environmental health and social wellbeing to the year 2060.

Social wellbeing committee co-chair, Nancy Heinmiller said the two-year process to develop the sustainability strategy lead to the realization that although Halton Hills is affluent – the mean income is well above the provincial average – there is a lack of awareness by some people of the plight of those who are less well off.

Two thousand Halton Hills residents live in poverty and Heinmiller said they need affordable homes and public transit. A youth co-ordinator reported that some youth, charged with relatively minor offences, risk arrest because they can't get to court in Milton. Seniors' advocates report there currently is no affordable assisted-housing available for seniors in Halton Hills.

Heinmiller said in face of that information, Halton Hills needs a champion for social justice – like the Town Environmental Advisory Committee that deals with the environment, the Cultural Roundtable or the economic development committee.

Who will step up?



DRESSED FOR SUCCESS: With make-up and hair done, models, from left: Melanie Dixon, Helen Tazzman, Moya Johnson and Lis Turner, all of Georgetown, were ready for the Canadian Federation of University Women's well-attended fashion show last Sunday at Blue Springs golf club. – Ted Tyler photo

The gift of giving

It's a very interesting time of year for us with the kids. We've got Little J who just celebrated her third birthday, and her brother who is just about to turn 1 1/2 years in a week. I just know this Christmas is going to be a rewarding challenge.

It's easy to get caught up in the commercial aspect of the season with kids at this age. Most kids see a toy catalogue and start pointing and saying "I want." Doesn't every parent want to ensure that Santa gets everything their child asks for from the big guy? I think I'm doing pretty well though. Santa finished his task a few weeks ago and I feel content with what they are getting, however, I keep looking at it thinking, is it enough?

Since the kids were born, we've consciously tried not to over-do it with toys and remind the grandparents and relatives of this. We would rather the kids have fewer toys and their time/attention. However, at Christmas it is a hard thing to accomplish. We've all tried hard and I hope they will benefit from this.

Another thing I started doing with them last year was donating a toy from each of them to the Halton Police Toys for Tots program that collects them during the Christmas parade. Last year, I didn't plan it very well so we had



By **Angela Tyler**

a quick trip to Giant Tiger before the parade. Little J didn't really understand and wanted to keep the toys herself and even offered to share with her brother, however, she did finally give the toys to the people collecting them.

This year, I remembered earlier and she and I had a little talk about helping out boys and girls who don't have toys like they do. I told her that she and her brother had plenty of toys and they even had a few brand new toys in their closets we hadn't used yet. Before I knew it, she went to both closets and got a toy from each of them and told me they were for another girl or boy. I was pretty darn proud of her at that moment.

Shortly after that, we passed our first Salvation Army kettle. It was a bit early and the poor lady was standing in bitter cold wind outside. I knew I didn't have any change on me only bills. I promised the lady that we would contribute when we came out of the store. Yet a strange thing happens when I see the kettles and the volunteers. I always am reminded of a story my

dad and my Great Aunt Phyl would tell me when I was little about how the Salvation Army was always there for the soldiers during World War II, sometimes even when the Red Cross couldn't be. While sound track was running through one side of my brain, the other side was wondering how many times that volunteer had heard that same story with people who promised to donate, and then leave the store without giving a copper. I truly had planned on giving when I left, however, it didn't feel like enough. It didn't feel good saying that and it felt even worse when Little J asked me what the lady was doing.

With her brother in the shopping cart I grabbed my wallet and found \$5. I put it in Little J's hand and explained that the lady was collecting money to help people who don't have a lot and need help. I told her to go give the lady (who was about a foot away) the money and say thank you to her. Off she went with a smile on her face, gave the lady the money, said "thank you" and added "have a nice day." It was another proud mommy moment.

It feels good helping people who need help and it feels even better when your child does it. It's a hard time of year for so many. If you can give to those who need a little help...please do.

Looking Back



Ten Years Ago

- Costly delays, high fees and rude staff – several people with development plans voiced concerns about treatment from the Town, which responded that public safety, not developers' frustrations dictate the planning process.

- The Town formally offered to help the volunteer ASAP (Acton Sports Action Park) committee efforts to build a skateboard park in Acton.

Five Years Ago

- Environmental concerns fuelled Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong's opposition to the so-called "Big Pipe", which would bring water, and development, to north Halton.

- Hydro One's plans to twin the exiting Bruce to Milton power corridor could end with buy-outs for five Acton property owners. Hydro One said it would look at moving the line in the Highway 7 area to avoid the need for the residential properties.



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