

# EDITORIAL

with Traci Gardner

## Be a responsible host

The holidays are a time to celebrate with friends, family and co-workers. Hosting a party can be as fun as the event itself, but every responsible host must know that it's only a great time if all your guests get home safely.

When throwing a party over the Christmas Season, or any time of year, as the host you have a social responsibility. That responsibility includes everything from planning the menu to ensuring that guests will not be drinking and driving when your party is over.

Bars that serve drinks for profit are regulated by laws that can determine how, where, and to whom drinks can be served. But, with private parties in people's homes sometimes the hosts will provide refreshments, but typically guests are asked to bring their own alcohol, which makes it much harder to have control over how much guests are drinking. As a social host, you should be concerned about how much alcohol your guests have consumed before getting behind the wheel.

The Canadian Safety Council recommends that when hosting a party, you plan appropriately by:

- Not drinking, or limiting your own alcohol intake to better monitor how much your guests are drinking.
- Know who you are inviting, and look for changes in behaviour to signal that a person is intoxicated.
- Serve lots of food with proteins and fat, and have lots of non-alcoholic choices. Avoid salty and sugary foods as that contributes to more alcohol consumption.
- See your guests to the door when they leave in order to assess their condition before allowing them to drive.
- If a guest is showing signs of being impaired, suggest that they give you their car keys and call them a cab or invite them to spend the night.
- Be prepared with a designated driver who can drive those guests home, who just cannot stay. Employers can plan ahead by providing a sign-up sheet for employees to volunteer to be sober transportation for office parties.
- If a person refuses to hand over their keys or spend the night, do not be afraid to call the police, it may seem harsh, but it is much better than the tragic consequences.

As a host or the homeowner, being sued for damages or injuries your guests might cause may be the last thing on your mind. But it is important to consider what can happen if a guest who drank too much is in a tragic collision. Even though the 'social host law' is still in the works, one thing is certainly clear, you could successfully be sued for injuries your guests cause - if you were proven negligent.

Whatever you do this season, however you celebrate, ensure that you and your guests will arrive home safe - please do not drink and drive!



**TREE HUNTING:** Nick Falcone, and kids Sena and Jack were hunting for that perfect Christmas tree on Tuesday night at the annual Rotary Club Tree sale held in the Hide House parking lot. The trees are selling fast with over half of the stock already sold. - Dawn Brown photo

## Halton Region among Greater Toronto's top employers

For the fourth year in a row, Halton Region has been recognized as one of the Top Employers in Greater Toronto. This special designation recognizes the Greater Toronto employers that lead their industries in offering exceptional places to work. Halton Region received high marks in the training and skills development category.

"We are honoured to be named one of the Top Employers in the GTA for a fourth consecutive year," said Regional Chair Gary Carr. "The employees who work at Halton are our greatest asset and this award is one of our most important achievements. Our skilled and dedicated employees help ensure that we provide residents with the best programs and services possible that make Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire."

Greater Toronto's Top

Employers is an annual competition organized by MediCorp Canada Inc., the editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers. This year's winners were announced yesterday in a new magazine MediCorp has published with The Globe and Mail and on the job search engine, Eluta.ca.

Halton was recognized for its investment in ongoing skills development through tuition subsidies for courses taken at outside institutions, subsidies for professional accreditation and the variety of in-house and online training programs offered for staff. Also noted were the Region's participation in Sheridan College's work placement program to provide internationally trained professionals with opportunities to gain Canadian work experience and the programs offered to encourage employees to prepare for life

after work with retirement planning assistance and contributions to a defined benefit pension plan. You can read more about why Halton Region was chosen on Eluta.ca

The Regional Municipality of Halton serves more than 500,000 residents in the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, and the Town of Oakville. Halton Region is committed to meeting the needs of its residents through the delivery of cost-effective, quality programs and services, including water and wastewater; Regional roads and planning; paramedic services; waste management; public health; social assistance; children's and seniors' services; housing services; heritage programs; emergency management and economic development. For more information, dial 311 or visit Halton Region's website at [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca)



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