

# COMMENT

## More letters to the editor

### Beliefs around the birds and the bees

Within the past year, Ontario residents, parents, school boards and many others in-between have expressed mixed emotions on the newly updated sexual education curriculum taught in Ontario schools. Kathleen Wynne, the Premier of Ontario introduced new sexual education to address several topics that are important for children to understand, as well as to help prevent bullying and suicide rates. However, numerous parties disagree with the depth of the revised curriculum and as a result, parents have pulled their children out of school and have moved to desperate measures, such as home schooling.

In my opinion, I believe that the updated sexual education curriculum should be taught within youth schools. Alongside with Wynne, if the new education was scrapped, the children would be at risk as well as bullying in youth would continue to increase. Alternately, others have a strong resentment against the curriculum. Several examples include; Catholic and Protestant Christian groups who feel that specific topics such as masturbation and homosexuality are not appropriate teachings. Secondly, Muslim parents are concerned the material is being introduced too early. Finally, according to a school in Thorncliffe Park located in Toronto, 50 per cent of students have been withdrawn from school, due to parental concern about the refurbished content.

Furthermore, the new sexual education curriculum provides information on bodies, sexual health, safe sex practices, as well as sexual and gender diversity. It is also touching upon sensitive topics such as; queer, gender independence, and transgender youth.

I personally feel that addressing these subjects at a young, innocent age will only cause benefits and positive awareness inside and outside of the school grounds. From my point of view, all parents need to understand these are popular, as well as important on-going problems within our society nowadays. Also, I strongly believe that knowledge is not the enemy, it is misinformation. In other words, children should be taught sexual education properly in school, instead of through false sources.

Additionally, numerous amounts of parents do not take enough time to thoroughly talk about the benefits and consequences of sexual actions. Parents many times become uncomfortable having a sex-related conversation with their children, this is due to the fact that they do not want their adolescents to partake in such events, which is why important details are being missed. On the flip side, youth become queasy and awkward when hear-

ing information like this come from their own parents.

Likewise, if youth are left to rely on educating themselves through TV, the internet, or pornography they will receive inaccurate information. This is because these forms of mass media rarely inform viewers about the negative aftermath such as; sexually transmitted infections, emotional distress, and pregnancy.

Many believe, including me that childhood experiences frame who you become as an adult. Therefore, making smart decisions and practicing safe sex will only help youths futures and reputations. A personal connection I can make to this is when I was in Grade 11, I took a parenting course. I was required to wear a pregnant stomach for a day, as well as take care of a simulated baby for a weekend. While I wore the real looking pregnant stomach, everybody in school would stare and judge as I walked through the hallways. However, even worse when I would go out in public with the simulated baby I received multiple disgusted looks. Overall, my parenting course was a great experience. This is because it taught me the responsibilities and struggles teen parents have to go through. This course is an amazing eye-opener, as well as sends a great message that not practicing safe sex may lead to the battle of having a child when you are not mentally or financially ready.

Particularly, if I was asked to make recommendations as to what I feel should happen in the future about Ontario's sexual educational curriculum, I would have a few. These will include a survey for parents to have a say in which topics they feel comfortable with their children learning about, as well as what age they feel the content should be learned at. This will be done through an anonymous online survey. Lastly, a recommendation I would have for this ongoing issue is to have the option for each student to opt-out of three sexual education topics. These recommendations will lead to fewer students being withdrawn from public and Catholic schools across Ontario.

To conclude, I have the same viewpoint as Kathleen Wynne and strongly agree with the new, updated version of Ontario's sexual education curriculum. If making children aware of mature topics at a younger age will benefit their lives in the long run, then I am one hundred percent for it. So, together let us all get on board and draw attention to making the upcoming generations safe and protected.

*Kristina Machado*

## Spread some joy

With Christmas quickly approaching, it's a good time to reflect on the past year as we look forward to a new one.

Looking back on 2016, there are many fond memories of meetings and events with people across Wellington County and Halton Hills. It was enjoyable to have the opportunity to listen to your feedback and make sure that your voices were heard in Ottawa.

As a member of the Official Opposition, we spent 2016 fulfilling our constitutional role of opposing the Liberal government and holding them to account. To this end, we have had many successes. We successfully pressured the government to vote in favour of our motion to bring Yazidi refugees, a religious minority that has been brutalized by the Islamic State (IS), to Canada.

We have also successfully made the case that the government must hold a referendum on electoral reform, and we opposed the government's plan to increase income taxes.

As we move into 2017, we will continue to work hard on your behalf in Ottawa as the Official Opposition.

Locally, the Christmas season is an important time for the Christian community to reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ some 2,000 years ago.

It is also a time to give back to our community, a time to

give to friends and family, and to neighbours in need of a helping hand to make it through the holidays.

As we gather around for Christmas celebrations and dinners, please think of those across Wellington County and Halton Hills who would benefit from your generosity during this season.

As you shop for your holiday meals, please consider donating food to your local food bank. For a complete list of needed items, please contact your nearest foodbank: Centre Wellington Food Bank ([www.cwfoodbank.org](http://www.cwfoodbank.org) or 519-787-1401), Erin Food Bank ([www.eastwellingtoncommunityservices.com](http://www.eastwellingtoncommunityservices.com)

or 519-833-9696), Rockwood Food Bank ([www.eastwellingtoncommunityservices.com](http://www.eastwellingtoncommunityservices.com) or 519-856-2113), Acton Foodshare ([www.actonfoodshare.com](http://www.actonfoodshare.com) or 519-853-0457), and Georgetown Bread Basket ([www.georgetownbreadbasket.ca](http://www.georgetownbreadbasket.ca) or 905-873-3368).

Whether you choose to donate food, clothes, or gifts to local causes, your contribution will make the holidays merrier for those who are in need.

During this Christmas season, I along with Carrie and our three boys, William, Alistair, and Cameron would like to wish you and your family all the best for the holidays and the New Year.

I look forward to continuing to serve you in 2017.



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