

EDITORIAL

with Dawn Brown

Everyone benefits from a healthy workplace

This past Tuesday marked World Mental Health Day. Observed annually every October 10, World Mental Health Day is meant to raise awareness about mental health while also encouraging better support for mental health issues. This year's theme was Mental Health in the Workplace—perhaps more apt than ever as so many of us are working harder and for longer hours than in the years before.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 300 million people suffer from depression world wide, while 260 million people struggle with anxiety disorders, many living with both. These types of disorders can affect those living with them making it difficult for them to work or live productively, and, as per a study led by WHO, cost the global economy \$1 trillion dollars (US) in lost productivity each year.

Yet despite these numbers, there is still a stigma where mental health is concerned, and still a need for support.

For many of us, we spend almost as much time at work with coworkers as we do at home with our own families—and in some cases, more. And while technology can be a grand thing, thanks to cell phones, email and texting, even the short time we do have with our families—hours that would have at one time given us break from the workplace, some downtime—is encroached on by employers, clients and coworkers so that we never seem to completely leave the workplace behind.

WHO states that while work is good for mental health, a negative working environment can lead to physical and mental health issues. Poor health and safety practices, poor management, communication and a lack of support for employees, as well as an inability for employees to make decisions or control their own work areas, along with inflexible hours and ambiguous tasks and objectives can all play a part in creating a negative working environment.

Employers who strive to create a healthy workplace that includes mental health intervention as part of a health and well-being strategy benefits their organization as much as their employees. A WHO-led study estimated that for every \$1 (US) put into treatment for common mental health disorders, there is a of \$4 (US) return in improved health and productivity. Meaning, employers who invest into the health and safety of their employees, who help to create a healthy work life balance, will see the benefits in productivity from their employees.

For more information and resources regarding mental health and the workplace visit: www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/mental_health.php and thinkmentalhealth.ca



PLAQUE UNVEILED: A heritage designation plaque was unveiled at Rolling Hills Farm on Tenth Line on October 4. Anne Fisher - Heritage Planner (left), J.M. Rowe - Heritage Halton Hills, Mayor Rick Bonnette, property owners Tom and Sandra Monahan, and Councillor Ted Brown - Chair of Heritage Halton Hills. - Submitted photo

Holiday shopping



By
Angela Tyler

On Sunday afternoon, I finally found some motivation to get out and pick up a couple things I had forgotten for our family dinner that night. One item I needed wasn't available in town, so I headed down to Milton for a quick trip. I praised myself silently as I whizzed over to the 4th Line for remembering that it was a sunny, Sunday Thanksgiving afternoon and "city folk" who like to go to Chudleighs for an apple picking afternoon in the country experience would be out in force. I avoided the insane lineups on Highway 25 entering and exiting the apple farm, which now go both north and south of it. I was the smart one, I thought until I realized I had voluntarily gone to a grocery store in Milton on a long weekend—the day before these stores close for 24 hours.

I told the kids we would be less than an hour as we only had to get a couple things. Famous last words. As we drove into the parking lot there was a sense of "uh-oh" even amongst the kids. It was like pulling into Yorkdale at five minutes before close on Christmas Eve. Every single parking spot was full for as far as the

eye could see. However, by this time, we were at the point of no return. In three hours we had company coming, so I wasn't about to back down now.

Crammed parking lots. Wall to wall people in every single aisle in the store. Shelves bare, raided like how it must have occurred in Florida a few weeks ago when the hurricane hit. Every check-out teller was on duty, and every teller had a ridiculous line up even though they were processing items at lightning speed. At one point, I grasped both kids for dear life fearing they'd get run over by either the string of carts being rounded up to go back to the store or backed over by a mini-van driver not paying attention to their back-up screen.

It seems every holiday is the same thing. We the consumer feel the need to go crazy buying food because, God help us, the grocery store is going to be closed for 24 consecutive hours. In the bigger towns and cities there are some grocery

stores that remain open over the holiday. We aren't one of those towns or cities, and although we aren't far away from them, I feel at least we have a bit of an excuse to go hog wild with the food purchases. But this craziness happened in a town that has grocery stores that stay open on statutory holidays.

It's hard to believe it was only 25 years ago that Sunday shopping was illegal in Ontario—whether it was a statutory holiday or not. We now have adults who do not know what it was like not to have any stores open on Sunday except some corner stores or maybe the Eaton's Centre.

What a strange concept now—banning Sunday shopping because Christianity recognizes it as a day of rest, the Lord's day. It makes you wonder why we ban shopping on statutory holidays. Statutory holidays are National holidays. However, should retailers be forced to observe them if they want to stay open for their consumers? Maybe in another 25 years banned shopping on Thanksgiving or Good Friday or Christmas will be a strange concept too.



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