



Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette (right) and St. Sahag And St. Mesrob Armenian Saturday School principal Yetvart Balian (centre) lay a wreath in Cedarvale Park Saturday to commemorate the 98th anniversary of the Armenian genocide and to pay tribute to the 'Georgetown Boys'— Armenian youths who came to the town between 1923 and 1927.

Submitted photo

Town remembers the 'Georgetown Boys'

A memorial service, held Saturday at Cedarvale Park and hosted by St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Saturday School (SSSM), commemorated the 98th anniversary of the Armenian genocide and paid tribute to the 'Georgetown Boys'.

The event honoured the memory of the victims who lost their lives and celebrated the memory of the survivors, such as the Armenian orphans, who were given a second chance at life by the Canadian government, and adopted Georgetown as their hometown.

The entire student body of the Toronto-based school, along with principal Yetvart Balian, staff, parents, the pastor and the parish council of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church attended the service.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette paid tribute to the "Georgetown Boys".

In 1923, on Dominion Day, 50 Armenian boys arrived at Cedarvale farm (now

Cedarvale Park) after a three-week long journey by foot, road, sea and train. They were the first wave of non-British child refugees to enter Canada.

"All in all 109 boys came to Georgetown between the years of 1923 to 1927. We all know them now as 'The Georgetown Boys,'" said Bonnette.

"This is a remarkable story of survival and cultural preservation," he added. "The ability of these Armenian children to retain their cultural heritage in the face of tremendous pressure to integrate... is truly inspiring to all of us. In 2001 the Province of Ontario officially recognized this event as a genocide and the government of Canada soon followed in 2004.

"Georgetown is proud to have this history as part of our roots and we should all celebrate the future generations that keep the Georgetown Boys' spirit alive," said Bonnette.

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