

MTO reduces speed in Norval for safety of local blind child

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Four-year-old Elora Eng of Norval received a helping hand from Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette and Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott to make her walk to and from the school bus stop a safer one. It's believed to be the first time that Blind Child signs have been erected on a provincial roadway in Ontario. Photo by Eamonn Maher

A Norval family is hopeful that a couple of measures taken along Hwy. 7 through the village will make their kindergartner's walk to school every day as safe as possible.

And the Ministry of Transportation, at the urging of local community leaders, has gone to unprecedented lengths to try to ensure her safety.

Four-year-old Elora Eng is legally blind, afflicted with Albinism and Nystagmus, and requires her caregivers to guide her on a short walk to and from her home to the bus stop, located at the corner of Hwy. 7 and Louisa St.

The family contacted the Norval Community Association last year about the issue, which in turn approached the Ministry of Transportation about reducing the speed limit through that section of the roadway from the current 60 km/h.

Their request was recently granted, with a Blind Child sign erected by the Town of Halton Hills on both the east and west side of the road, and the speed is expected to be reduced to 50 km/h through Norval extending easterly to Caseley Dr. within the next few weeks once the amended regulation is signed by Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca.

"Although we have a sidewalk across the bridge, we don't have a curb, and as a result of any snow, we have to walk on the road. It can be very dangerous," said Elora's grandmother, Mariane Martin.

"Sometimes it's like a freeway along (Hwy. 7) in the mornings and we had to do something to get people to slow down, not just for Elora but for other kids too."

Kathy Gastle, president of the Norval Community Association, Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott and Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette all lobbied the MTO to install the signs and amend the speed limit regulation.

The MTO's communications co-ordinator, Astrid Poei, said she believes that the Blind Child signs in Norval are the first of their kind to be erected on a provincial highway.

United Way falls short of its 2014 campaign target

All the donations have been counted and the United Way of Halton Hills' 2014 campaign has finished short of its goal.

A total of \$360,000 came into the campaign, which is 90 per cent of the aggressive \$400,000 target that was set based on the needs of the community agencies.

Susan Ksiezopolski, 2014 Campaign Chair, calls the existing work place campaigns "our change heroes."

"Without their dedication and help we would not have reached 90% of our goal," said Ksiezopolski. "Because of them Halton Hills residents will continue to receive the services they have come to expect from our United Way funded agencies."

Ksiezopolski said she's hopeful the momentum the United Way developed over the past year will help to grow the campaign for 2015.

"We are looking forward to engaging more of our local businesses to support us in meeting the needs of our growing community," she said.

United Way executive director Janet Foster said during the campaign there was loss in some areas of local business support, but that was offset with "wonderful growth in others."

"Businesses such as TD Williamson and the Town of Halton Hills ran United Way campaigns that brought in more revenue than had been anticipated. Others such as CPI and ITW Permatex also raised significant funds towards the campaign," said Foster. "As well, Halton Hills Hydro stepped up to the plate and began a workplace campaign that was well received by many of their staff."

"Unfortunately, we lost some local business donations through closure, moves and restructuring," said Foster.

Ksiezopolski said although the United Way didn't make its goal, the need in the community has not declined and therefore the Board of Directors decided to fund agencies at levels close to last year by dipping into reserves.

Agencies approved for funding by the Board of Directors are:

- Acclaim Health— Friendly Visiting Program
- ADAPT— Know the Deal Program
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters— 3 programs: Mentoring; Group Recreation and In School Mentoring
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Halton)— Health Promotion and Education



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