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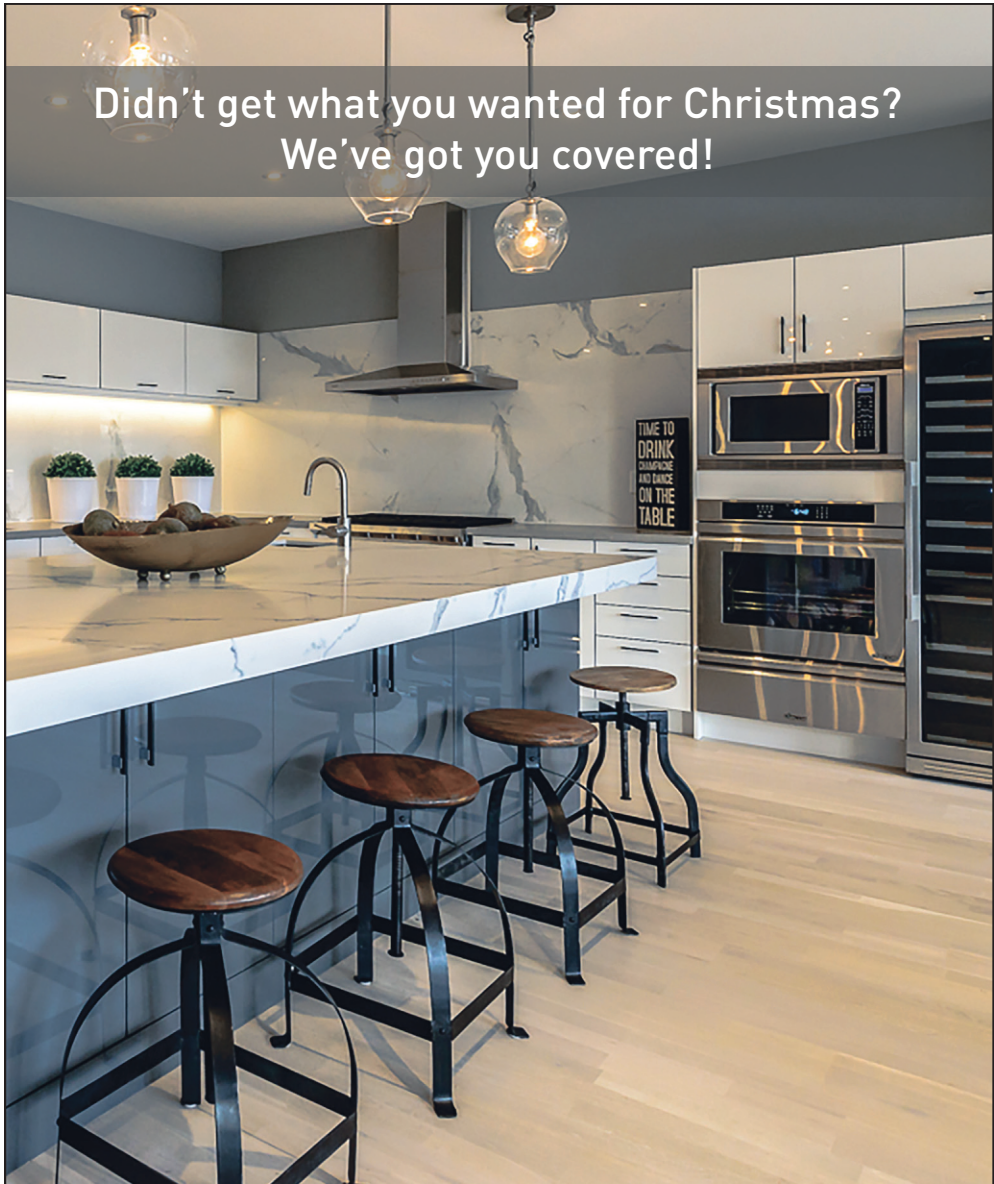






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COMMUNITY

Dogs 'paw-vide' relief

EAMONN MAHER
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Studying for high school exams can be a stressful and overwhelming activity, so the Halton Hills Public Library brought in some four-legged diversions for beleaguered students this week.

For the first time, therapy dogs from St. John Ambulance dropped by the library's Georgetown branch Wednesday and Acton's on Thursday to provide a respite for high schoolers looking for a break from the books.

The Acton youth services librarian, Jodie Mandarin, said the library usually provides snacks and a cordoned-off area for "exam crammers," but wanted to go a step further this year by having the therapy dogs and their trainers stop by for a couple of hours.

Levi, an 11-year-old Boston Terrier, and nine-year-old chocolate lab Libby are



Eamonn Maher photo

From left, Grade 12 Acton High School students Dario Offidani, Anthony Aziz and Olivia Nowacki take a break from studying for a Canadian History exam this week to visit with St. John Ambulance therapy dogs Libby and Levi at the Acton branch of the Halton Hills Public Library.

used to snuggling up with strangers as they visit long-term care facilities and schools, as well as women's and children's shelters on a regular basis.

Libby's owner and trainer, Christine Lacombe, said the nonprofit, volunteer-run St. John's Ambulance Dog Therapy program wel-

comes new volunteers and their canine counterparts to join the group for their weekly visits.

And there are perks. Both Levi and Libby received celebrity treatment when they attended both the 2015 Pan Am Games and last year's Invictus Games in Toronto.

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