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NEWS

# PILOT PROJECT HELPING SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Continued from page 1

vides specialized transportation throughout the municipality for Halton Hills residents 65 and older and those with disabilities.

The shuttle service to Oakville runs Monday through Friday, with a fare cost of \$4 each way and reservations accepted up to 24 hours prior to travel.

The Canning family of Acton is among those already taking advantage of the new route, with their son Jacob riding the bus to his co-operative placement program at the hospital that accommodates students with intellectual and developmental challenges.

With no transportation provided by the Halton District School Board for its program, mother Lisa Canning said getting Jacob to the hospital has been a challenge. Her husband, Evan, had been going into work late to drive Jacob in, then they were paying \$80 a day for cab fare to get him home.

"We're very thankful for the Town of Halton Hills stepping in and providing this service for special needs people, and the seniors who need to go to Oakville," she said, noting she feels the school board should be covering the



Town of Halton Hills photo

The ActiVan pilot project will run until June 30, 2022.

transportation bill for its students in the hospital program.

"It (the ActiVan service) provides some financial relief for our family."

The new service was also lauded by those around the council table, including Ward 3 Coun. Moya Johnson.

"It's certainly a great first step," she said during the November meeting when the pilot was approved. "I know there are lots of people looking for transportation, and they need to get to Oakville. I'm absolutely thrilled to see this."

The sentiment was echoed by Mayor Rick Bonnette, along with Ward 3 Coun. Wendy Farrow-Reed, who said the shuttle is going

to make a lot of local residents happy and healthier.

The 33-week pilot program is estimated to cost \$37,000 to operate, which will be partially offset by fare box revenue.

Staff will report back to council in the spring with an update on the pilot project and recommendations for next steps beyond June 30.

For further details on registering for and booking an ActiVan trip, visit <https://bit.ly/3cWkEx3>.

*STORY BEHIND THE STORY: With the demand for transit services often coming to the forefront in Halton Hills, we wanted to take a closer look at how this pilot project is going to benefit local residents.*

## VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE AVAILABLE FOR KIDS SET TO ENTER KINDERGARTEN

In an effort to make the transition to school easier, the Halton District School Board is offering families a virtual kindergarten experience, as traditional in-person open houses are not being held.

Through [ten.hdsb.ca](http://ten.hdsb.ca), kindergar-

olds can explore a kindergarten classroom with videos, pictures and activities, while parents/guardians can learn about the program, play-based learning, community resources in Halton and before and after school care.

Families can also sign up

to receive a welcome package from the board, including a free children's book.

Registration for kindergarten begins in January and will be by appointment only (in person and/or virtual) through the school your child will attend.

To start kindergarten in the fall of 2022, children must be four years old by Dec. 31, 2022 for Year 1 and five years old by Dec. 31, 2022 for Year 2.