

# 'STAGGERING AND HEART WRENCHING'

## PARK'S NEW PURPLE BENCH SHEDS LIGHT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

HERB GARBUTT  
hgARBUTT@metroland.com

Darian Henderson-Bellman would often go to Dominion Gardens Park and sit in the gazebo on a memorial bench dedicated to her father, Conrad Bellman, who died in 2012.

Sadly, today, no more than 20 feet away, there is another memorial bench on the path leading to the gazebo. The purple bench, the first of its kind in Halton, is in memory of Henderson-Bellman, who was shot and killed in July 2020.

Her ex-boyfriend faces a first-degree murder charge. The charge hasn't been proven in court.

The bench was installed by Halton Women's Place and inspired by the Barb's Benches Project in honour of Barb Baillie, a Nova Scotia woman who was choked to death by her husband in 1990. It is also an expansion of the intimate partner violence memorial unveiled at Halton Regional Police headquarters last November.

"We want to create more awareness about the issue of domestic violence, our programs and services for Halton Hills residents in



Left: An emotional Paul Henderson and wife Flo Bellman speak at the unveiling and dedication ceremony of a purple bench in their granddaughter's memory. Right: Roses for the 14 victims of the École Polytechnique massacre in Montreal rest on the newly-installed purple bench.

hopes of reaching more women and girls who are experiencing violence and abuse," said Laurie Hepburn, executive director of Halton Women's Place.

The unveiling of the bench Monday coincided with the 32nd anniversary of the murder of 14 women at École Polytechnique in Montreal. Fourteen roses were placed on the bench

as the names of the victims were read.

Halton Police Chief Stephen Tanner said officers in the region respond to an average of 10 intimate partner violence calls every day, which doesn't even tell the full extent of the problem.

"It is staggering and heart wrenching because we know this type of vio-

lence often goes unreported to the police," he said. "Our officers witness the personal toll of violence on the family unit firsthand all too often."

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette said there have been 335 cases of domestic abuse in Halton Hills this year. He said the presence of the bench is just one way to bring attention to the



"If one person walking by this bench is able to find the help they need and it saves them, that's great."

- Flo Bellman

problem and to let them know help is available.

"Urge anyone that you know in peril to connect with Halton Women's Place," he said. "There are safe places for our support. Halton Hills is a community that is caring and domestic violence has no place here."

Flo Bellman, who raised Darian after becoming her legal guardian, said her granddaughter always wanted to help people. In that way, she said the bench is a fitting tribute in that it will raise awareness and encourage those in abusive relationships to seek help.

"She would think this is wonderful. If there's some poor soul cowering under a table, and this helps them

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES

**Halton Women's Place:**  
905-878-8555 (crisis line)  
**Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services (SAVIS):**  
savis@savisofhalton.org,  
905-825-3622 (office) or  
905-875-1555 (crisis line)  
**Halton Violence Prevention Council:** 905-845-3811 ext. 124  
or hvpc.coord@hvpc.ca

to come forward," Bellman said. "It just takes one person and you have to give them the courage. If one person walking by this bench is able to find the help they need and it saves them, that's great."

There are plans to install four more purple benches throughout Halton.

## Temporary Road Closure due to Event - The Holiday Market



Notice is hereby given in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, and Town of Halton Hills By-law 2008-0020 regarding the temporary road closure for the purpose of the following community events:

### The Holiday Market - Organized by the Georgetown BIA

Saturday December 11, 2021, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Main St. from Church St. to James St., Georgetown.

If you require any additional information regarding this road closure, contact the Recreation and Parks Department at 905-873-2600, ext. 2269.