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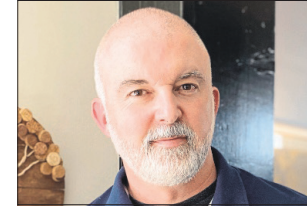


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OPINION

A LIFELINE FOR SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

IRONWOOD PROJECT PROVIDES SAFE PLACE TO TALK WITH PEOPLE WHO 'GET IT', WRITES CHRIS KIRBY



CHRIS KIRBY
 Column

"I had so many breakthrough moments that fundamentally changed my life."

This response from a participant is what it is all about.

When The Ironwood Project started hosting peer support group sessions in February of 2019, we weren't sure who, or how many people, would show up. It was the first time a group of its kind had run in Halton Hills.

Today we are proud to say that over 50 participants have been a part of our groups.

What is The Ironwood Project? We are a group for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Ironwood is a place to share as much, or as little, as our participants are comfortable with.

It is a place to explore topics like isolation, fear and anger with people who have been in similar situations.

Having peers who can

share the same language of trauma can be surprisingly healing. As one participant told us, "Being around people who 'get it' is so incredibly healing. Hearing people's stories helped me to better understand my own."

Ironwood has grown from a donated space on Main Street in Georgetown, to our own home last year. We rolled with the ups and downs of the last couple of years by offering online groups and flipping back to in-person when possible.

Now we are focused on continuing with in-person programming, and we are looking for new participants. Our goal is to create a safe space for survivors to be together. As one survivor told us, "I always felt safe and heard and surrounded by people that understood and respected me."

Outreach in our community is also an important part of what we do. To

meet that goal, we have presented to groups like the Halton Regional Police Victim Services Unit and the Halton Sexual Assault Advisory Committee Meeting.

In addition, we are now an affiliated partner with Darkness to Light, an international not-for-profit working to educate adults about the prevention of childhood sexual abuse.

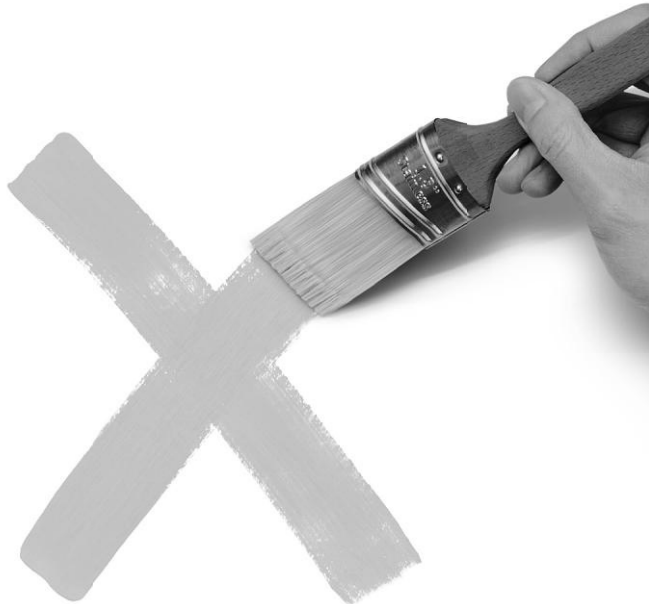
We provide accredited training to groups looking to protect children from sexual abuse in the GTA.

With one in three girls and one in six boys experiencing sexual abuse by the age of 18, we know the number of adults in our community who need these services is staggering. It is time to talk about, support and prevent childhood sexual abuse trauma.

The Ironwood Project is a not-for-profit based in Halton Hills. Our services are offered free of charge and run by volunteers. For more information go to www.theironwoodproject.ca or email us at info@theironwoodproject.ca.

Chris Kirby is the director of The Ironwood Project.

An election has been called for June 2.



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YOU OPINIONS

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Notice of Noise Exemption Application - Northern Heat Rib Series



Please be advised the Northern Heat Rib Series has applied to the Town of Halton Hills for an exemption to the Noise By-law 2010-0030 Part 2, Schedule A to be held at 1 Park Avenue, Georgetown.

The report will be before Council on May 24, 2022. For meeting start time and more information, visit calendar.haltonhills.ca/meetings. If you wish to appear before Council regarding this item you must register as a delegation. Complete the Application to Appear before Council form at haltonhills.ca/delegation.

For further information on registering as a delegation, contact Melissa Lawr, Deputy Clerk at 905-873-2600, ext. 2333.