

MONDO CARNE: 'It's a dog's life' at Milton Fairgrounds



For Halton resident Canadian/American Champion Sincerly (sic) Born In the USA (known to his fans as Springsteen), last weekend's dog shows hosted by the Kilbride and District Kennel Club at Milton Fairgrounds were just another chance to have fun and be pampered by his owner and handler Jennifer Peddle of

Georgetown. Jennifer, assistant to twenty-five year veteran handler Peter Scott of Aberfoyle, takes Springsteen, a Miniature Poodle of some note in the doggy world, on the road most weekends to shows all over Ontario and the neighbouring provinces and states where he and Peter's canine clients strut their stuff in the show

ring. For anyone thinking of getting a purebred puppy, a dog show is a good opportunity to see their favourite breed and to talk to breeders. If you missed last weekend's shows, Milton Fairgrounds is the venue for Oakville and District Kennel Club championship shows on the 11th and 12th September.

Improving education

A PERSONAL VIEW BY PAUL TATE

Since becoming a Trustee, I have been asked many times about what I think would improve education for children the most. For me, the biggest single improvement in education doesn't lie with the government providing additional funding, or that we add more teachers and educational assistants, or add more schools, or spend more on technology, or reduce class sizes, or improve the curriculum, or improve testing. I am not saying that individually or collectively these items wouldn't improve education but, for me, they are not the quickest solution.

The biggest impact upon improving a child's education, in my view, is getting that child's parents engaged in his or her education. Many times over the past 10 years, I have stated publicly that parents who expect to drop their children off at school in kindergarten and pick them up educated at the end of Grade 12, are sorely mistaken. A parent taking an interest in their child's schooling clearly shows the child that education matters.

How does a parent become engaged in their child's education?

Here are a few suggestions.

1. Get to know your child's school. Meet the teacher at every opportunity. Attend the open houses at the school, concerts, meet the teacher night, and if possible attend School Council meetings.

2. The School Council is a source of information that many parents seem to shy away from attending because they believe they may be pressed into volunteer work for the school. The volunteer work I'll discuss next, but did you know that when you attend a School Council meeting you'll hear about all of the background that makes your child's school work? This information will help you support and judge your child's progress. You may also discover that there are events taking place at the

school that you were unaware of because the information from the school languishes in the bottom of your child's backpack.

3. Volunteers are extremely important for school success. Not everyone has the time to volunteer regularly, but you should find at least one time each year to do some volunteer activity for your child's school.

4. Set school as the central priority in your child's life. Each morning ask what's happening at school that day. At the end of the day, ask how the school day was. Find out about homework assignments, and help with the work. Don't do it, but help. Set a routine time each day for schoolwork. Each morning make sure your child is going to school with everything they need to be a success.

5. Learn about your child's strengths and weaknesses. Develop a realistic understanding about your child's social, intellectual, and physical abilities and the current level of their skill development. If necessary, be prepared to work with your child's teacher on how to improve learning for your child in areas where extra help is needed.

Looking over these 5 points, they really do add up to a bit of commitment. Mind you, commitment is what raising children is all about. For many children spending time ensuring they are learning and comfortable in school, reduces the very real risk of potential trouble in the form of failing grades, less than desirable social contacts, substance abuse, criminal behavior, which is a short list of the possible negative outcomes. Over the next years as Trustee, one of my chief goals will be to support parent involvement, by ensuring that our Board promotes the most welcoming atmosphere possible for parents.

Paul Tate is Vice-Chair of the Halton District School Board

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