

Cuts to funding damage Catholic Schools programs

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Fauteux admits the announcement wasn't the most pleasant way to begin the school year, and since then he has been concerned about how the board will be able to handle a reduction in special needs reserves. The claw-backs took effect immediately following the government's announcement in early September.

Mr. Fauteux says if the funding isn't reinstated he will need to examine special needs programming at every level and the result might mean longer waiting times for student assessments and less teaching staff serving children with disabilities. "Everything we do in special education is going to have to come under review because \$659,000 is a lot of money."

As of this year, the board has 1500 children that require special education programming, with 568 of these students requiring additional support. Additional support is provided by educational assistants or EAs; itinerant teachers that travel from school

to school and speech language pathologists employed by the board.

"WE WENT FORWARD TRUSTING WE COULD EFFECT CHANGE AT THE MINISTRY LEVEL"

Of the board's 1500 special education students, there are also 111 autistic students, students that the board had hoped would benefit from the opening of the transition centre. The transition centre, located at St. Patrick's Elementary School in Burlington, is designed to serve autistic students from across Halton Region. The board opened the centre on September 22 in spite of the claw backs to its reserve funds, money that the board had intended to also use to operate the centre. Mr. Fauteux couldn't provide any guarantees as to how long the centre will remain open. "We've

still opened it, but whether we will be able to sustain it or not is a question. We went forward trusting we could affect change at the ministry level."

During the last school year, the Catholic board was one of 10 school boards in Ontario that agreed to review and pilot the study, *Standards for Dealing with Students with Autism*. Those who took part in the study identified the need to establish a transition centre for autistic students. If funding is reinstated, the centre would provide assistance to parents and autistic children and offer training on autism for teachers and educational assistants.

Along with the loss of funding in special education, the board will also lose an estimated \$769,104 for the next school year if a funding model for transportation is implemented by the province. Under the new model, both the Catholic Board and the Halton District School Board will see a reduction in funding.

Rush Job

Fast paced conference for parents of young children

BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Parenting is tough work, particularly in our hectic society where it seems there's little time left over for family. Knowing that, the Milton Community Resource Centre (MCRC) is holding its first conference for parents of children from newborns to 6-year-olds.

The event, which takes place on Saturday, October 16, from 8:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m., was the brainchild of employees at the centre. Kate Williamson, MCRC's outreach coordinator, says staff hope to make this conference an annual event as a means of assisting people with what she describes as the "most important job we will ever have."

"YOU GET ALL THE INFORMATION... IN ONE QUICK RUSH"

The idea of holding the conference on one day and offering information on a variety of topics was one that staff considered important for people with hectic schedules. "People don't have time these days for lengthy courses," says Kate. "You get all the information (at this conference) in one quick rush."

Workshops touch on various topics of interest to parents including sibling relationships, childcare options, the role of fathers, nutrition tips for parents, and literacy among young children. There will also be workshops on the importance of both parents working together to raise their children, entitled *Parenting on the Same Page*, and a session called *Create and Carry* where parents can create an activity they can use at home.

The keynote speaker for the conference is Peggy Grall, author of *Just Change It, The Fast Track Guide to Personal and Professional Renewal*. The cost per person for the conference is \$10. The deadline for registrations is Wednesday, October 13. No childcare is provided during the conference. The conference will be held at MCRC's offices at 17 Nipissing Road in Milton. For more information, contact MCRC at 905-876-1244, ext. 10.

MCRC is North Halton's Ontario Early Years Centre. Ontario Early Years Centres, which receive funding from the province, provide information and programs to parents of children up to age six.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Cheryl Haug (left), program manager at Milton Community Resource Centre (MCRC), stands in front of a display promoting MCRC's parenting conference. She is joined by Kate Williamson, the centre's outreach coordinator.

Group opposes Flamborough quarry application

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see 450 trucks per day each way for 200 days per year, Monday to Friday.

"This will be the eighth largest quarry in Canada," Friends of the Rural Community and Environment (FORCE) Chair Graham Flint told those gathered for the meeting in Campbellville. "The scope of the impact for this will be huge."

"I THINK WE HAVE SOME GOOD SCIENCE"

Of concern for residents are a variety of quality of life and safety issues, from the proposed truck route of Millborough Line and Campbellville Road, to water safety and availability, housing values in the area and environmental concerns. "No reasonable person would approve this quarry," stated Flint, citing such factors as provincially significant wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas on the site, surrounding residential neighbourhoods and linkages to the aquifer that supplies the headwaters for Bronte Creek and the local community wells. "I think we have some good science, some good facts and some good data," he said. "Our strength will come in working together. We can and we will win this battle."

He also pointed out that the battle will not be easily or quickly won. FORCE predicts that it is in for a long and costly battle to prevent the quarry from being approved. FORCE has already raised over half of its projected costs of \$100,000 and urged the attendants at the meeting to help support the battle financially. All monies raised by FORCE are being used for the hiring of legal representation, technical experts and operating costs. "This is about making a commitment; a commitment to your family; a commitment to your community. It is a commitment to stop this quarry," he told the meeting. Flint also pointed out that anyone interested in finding out more about FORCE should check the website at www.stopthequarry.ca. As well, information can also be had directly from the developer himself, David Lowndes at the public open houses he holds every Thursday from 2-8 pm at the Carriage House, 515 11th Concession Road East.

"FORCE is not a group that is against quarries," argued Graham Flint. "FORCE is not against aggregate or the trucking industry. These industries are critical to the economy. We just think that this place, in this setting, is the wrong place to do this."

Wine, Dine and Bid Granite Ridge Golf Club to host United Way Annual Dinner and Auction

BY DONNA DANIELLI

Fun and a few surprises are on the agenda for the Milton United Way's annual Dinner and Auction on Friday October 15. To be held at the Granite Ridge Golf Club, the event will feature Toronto Star columnist and AM 640 Toronto's host of Guy's Garage Jim Kenzie as the Master of Ceremonies. Entertainment for the evening has been booked but is being kept as a special surprise. United Way Executive Director Anne Eadie assures us that the entertainment will be well worth waiting for. As well the evening will feature live and silent auctions, with such prizes as a condominium in Maui for a week, a year's worth of music lessons, handmade outdoor furniture and much more. One of the most sought after items is sure to be the ride in an exotic car of your choice and lunch with auto guru Jim Kenzie.

"All of the funds raised go to support the services in the Milton community," says Anne Eadie. "The focus of the evening is on building on the strengths of the community as we grow... Building a stronger tomorrow based on the strengths of today."

Tickets for the United Way Dinner and Auction are available at the United Way office or by calling 905-875-2550.