

# Trauma for teens 101

**CHAT brings graphic safety-first message to Halton Hills teens**

STORY & PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

The message for high school students in Acton was graphic. A slide show depicted pictures of accident victims, wrecked cars and a bloodstained car seat. Sobering would also be a good word to describe the talk given recently at Acton High School by members of the Community and Hospital Against Trauma (CHAT) committee, comprised of volunteers from the Milton District Hospital, Halton EMS, Halton Regional Police and local health departments.

The CHAT program, which originated in the Hamilton area, is an injury prevention and awareness program that includes a one-hour assembly presentation to secondary school students. The program has been tried successfully in Oakville and Milton, according to Halton Regional Police Const. Kate Pulford. And she says she and others from the committee wanted to bring CHAT to Halton Hills schools as well.

Const. Pulford said the message at this presentation, as at any others given by CHAT, touched on more than just the subject of not drinking and driving. "We are targeting everything. We want them to know what they should do to make themselves safe."

During the talk, Bill Kennedy, a paramedic with Halton EMS, emphasized over and over again that it's not disease, but trauma – or a powerful impact or injury to the body resulting from a car accident or other accident – that's responsible for killing teens in Halton. As he stood at the front of the auditorium, he told his young audience about the message he was trying to "hammer" home. "We are trying to decrease the number of chances of someone dying and experiencing trauma."

Mr. Kennedy said he didn't need to look at the research confirming the causes of death among teens. "Death from disease for this age group doesn't come close to those dying from trauma."

Mr. Kennedy stressed the difficult nature of his task, noting the need to cap-

ture his audience's attention. Taking a lesson from advertisers, he said it's important to "appeal to a person seven times before that person will go out and buy a product." So he told his audience that he would "emphasize and re-emphasize" his message of playing it safe.

Like Mr. Kennedy, fellow paramedic Pauline Smith, urged teens to

take a cautionary approach. She spoke of wearing the proper gear whether it's a life jacket or a helmet, of staying away from drugs and alcohol, of not drinking and driving. But she also pointed out the importance of not distracting someone who is driving. "Passengers shouldn't distract the driver. How is he going to be able to drive if you are distracting him?"

The story of trauma and its devastating affects on teens was also told by Joleen Hammond, a nurse from Milton District Hospital's emergency department, who described the fear young accident victims experience while in hospital and by Leslie Wells, a 27-year-old accident victim from Milton. Ms. Wells, who graduated from E. C. Drury High School, became a quadriplegic at the age of 18 after she had an accident at a pool. She'd been drinking on the day of the incident. She urged her audience to realize there are choices, and she noted that it's possible to play it safe and have a good time. "You only live once. Have fun, but don't be stupid."

The talk marked the first presentation made by CHAT in Halton Hills and it's one that will be made at other area high schools, says Const. Pulford. She said Halton Regional Police Const. Laurel Barnett and Maggie O'Connell, who is a health nurse with the Halton Hills' health department, would be taking the program to other schools in Halton Hills.

For more information on the program, contact Const. Pulford at 905-878-5511, ext. 2405. Her email address is katherine.pulford@hrps.on.ca.




The CHAT committee held its first talk in Halton Hills at the Acton High School on November 4. Attending the presentation were (left to right, front row) Bill Kennedy from Halton EMS, accident survivor Leslie Wells of Milton, and Allison Goertzen from the Red Cross North Halton branch. They were joined (back row, left to right) by Halton Regional Police Const. Kate Pulford, Milton District Hospital (MDH) nurse Joleen Hammond, MDH occupational therapist Maureen Stoskopf, and Pauline Smith from Halton EMS.




- Eye Exams Arranged (next door)
- Lab on Premises
- Certified Contact Lens Fitter

**(Carriage Square)**  
**Martin & Main Streets**  
**905-876-0556**






**Do you suffer from**

- Neck & lower back pain
- Migraines & headaches
- Arthritis & tendonitis
- Digestive & respiratory difficulties
- Allergies

**Chiropractic & acupuncture** are safe, gentle & effective ways for your entire family to get to the root of the problem and help you to take control of your health.

**Dr. Natalie McDonald** is looking forward to meeting you and providing you with individualized care suited to your lifestyle and health concerns.



**550 Ontario St. S., Suite 205**  
**Milton (Corner of Ontario & Derry)**  
Ample parking available.  
Call **(905) 875-2288**  
And begin to enjoy a pain free life.  
Services are covered by OHIP and most insurance plans.

**SPECIAL**

**GET IN SHAPE FOR CHRISTMAS**



- Purchase 2 months unlimited and receive the whole month of January **FREE**
- Take advantage of our no start up fee save \$80.00.
- Expires November 30th for new members only

**Bring a friend and receive 1 week unlimited.**

- Perfect for people who don't like to work out and sweat but want to see and feel results. Come in and enjoy your complimentary 1 hour treatment.

**INCHES AWAY**  
*To a New You*  
42 Bronte St. S. #11 Milton  
**905-876-2838**

