

## Community Open House on Saturday

The Value of One, the Power of Many is the theme of the International Year of Volunteers and Visitors will see the truth of that slogan during the Community Open House in the Georgetown Marketplace Mall this Saturday, Sept. 29th. Fifty displays showing the strength and vibrancy of community based activities in Halton Hills will line the central concourse of the mall from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

High School students who need to fulfill their community service obligations will find this an ideal place to discover volunteer opportunities. Newcomers to the town will discover the richness of services and options for participation in the life of Halton Hills.

Halton Hills has a provincial reputation for leadership in voluntarism and it was recognized this month with an award of excellence for its



**DRAW WINNER:** Angela Ackroyd of Caledon East was the lucky winner of a basket full of painting supplies, wrapped courtesy of Country Reflections, at the recent 5th anniversary draw and open house/registration at Acton's Paintin' Friends. —Submitted photo

participation in the Community Information Consortium. The Consortium was created to distribute and support, across Ontario, a computerized database for matching volunteers to volunteer opportunities.

The database was created by the Halton Social Planning Council Volunteer Centre, the Halton Information Providers and staff from the Halton Hills Public Library. This unique tool will be showcased at the Community Open House.

## LETTERS

### School Board committed to caring, safe environment

To the editor;

Following is a letter to parents and guardians of Halton public school children from the Halton District School Board.

**Dear Parents/Guardian;**

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the world changed for us all as a result of the horrific events that took place in the United States. We join with the rest of the civilized world in condemning those who carried out these contemptible terrorist acts against innocent civilians. Our hearts go out to the families and friends of the victims of this terrible tragedy.

The sophistication of the media has changed the way in which such events are reported, and now we are overwhelmed with the live graphic images of horrendous tragedies and numbed by the replaying of these images. Many of us, and many of our students, struggle for understanding and question some of the assumptions we have previously held about our isolation from such events.

It is important we assure our students that we will do all we can as a school system and as a community to maintain their safety. We solicit the assistance of our parents and community leaders in emphasizing that the events which took place in the United States were politically motivated acts of terror carried out by extremist fanatics. They were acts motivated by hatred and universally condemned by all major religious and ethnic groups. We request your assistance in helping students understand that all faiths and cultures oppose these terrorist acts.

It is important in the aftermath of this tragedy that we remain diligent in watching for any signs of racial, religious or cultural tensions emerging within our school community. As a school system we must focus on the values that make us a true community that cel-

brates our diversity. Hate, distrust and lack of acceptance is damaging at any level. We must not focus on blame nor participate in anything that reinforces hurtful stereotypes. To this end, we have developed plans, in consultation with our community partners, to assist our schools in dealing with the many issues we will continue to face in this regard.

The Halton District School Board's guiding principles state that **we are committed to providing a caring and safe environment that also recognizes the rights and dignity of all.** We are committed to preserving a learning environment in which all students and staff feel valued and are treated with respect. Behaviours that poison the learning and/or work environment making it an unpleasant or unsafe place to be will not be tolerated. Our commitment arises from our Guiding Principles, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ministry of Education's Safe Schools Policy and our own Code of Behaviour. We want to assure parents that we will be vigilant in guarding against inappropriate behaviours and determined in our efforts to provide the safe environment that students and staff deserve.

To assist parents in reinforcing this message of acceptance, understanding and respect for each other, we offer the following suggestions:

- Continue to be vigilant for any signs of inappropriate behaviour and reprisals against others based on faith and/or ethnicity. Actions based on hate, whether they are verbal or physical harassment insults, name-calling, celebratory behaviour, intimidation, hate-based graffiti, or mischief cannot be tolerated. Anyone found to have engaged in inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour may be suspended or expelled.

- Remind your child to

report any such incidents immediately to the principal. Principals will investigate all allegations. Depending on the situation, this may involve contacting parents, counselors, school social workers, school psycho-educational consultants or the Student Services Department.

- Encourage students to talk to a teacher or administrator if they have concerns about the behaviour of a fellow student or if they know of a student who is being harassed or intimidated. Explain that their co-operation is important for everyone's safety.

- Be aware of your conversations and your choice of words and expressions when you are near children/students. A misunderstood remark or comment can cause unnecessary fear, anxiety and/or confusion. Take care in the way in which you discuss these events in front of young children. Be aware that your child can sense your emotions and anxieties.

- When talking with your child, emphasize how tragic it is that hate exists and the negative impact that hate related activity and dissension can have on all of us. Encourage acceptance and understanding. Let your child talk about how he/she feels. Keep the lines of communication open to the level that is appropriate to the age of the child.

- It is important to stress that the act of a few do not reflect or speak for the beliefs or behaviours of a religious or ethnic group. Remind your child that the events in the United States were carried out by a group of terrorists not by a particular religious or ethnic group.

Your assistance in helping maintain our schools as safe learning communities is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Ethel Gardiner, Chair,  
D.L. Papke,  
Director of Education

# CANADA'S TRAVELING THEME PARK

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## The 151<sup>st</sup> Annual Erin Fair

from Thursday to Monday presents  
(October 4-8)

### CANADA'S TRAVELING THEME PARK

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**PreSale Special at The Co-Op**  
Only available until Oct. 4  
**50 Coupons for \$20.00**  
Special

**Thursday only 1 Loonie per Ride**  
**Friday 5-11**  
All you Can Ride **\$14.95**  
**Monday 11-5**  
All you Can Ride **\$14.95**

All day and all night extravaganza Midway rides plus  
Truck and Tractor Pulls, Horse Shows, Golden Helmets and George Fox.

**Over 40 big exhibition style rides, games and attractions**

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