

Region forum on homelessness

More than 130 participants turned out for the 2003 Homelessness Forum, hosted by Halton Region recently.

Participants included members of the public, representatives from independent social services agencies across the region, landlords, multicultural agencies, faith groups, youth, as well as several members of Regional Council.

"These are tough subjects. We've done enough work on it in the past year alone to know that there are no easy answers. Progress requires inspired ideas, community acceptance,

good planning, communication, and a lot of good old fashioned hard work," said Region Chairman Joyce Savoline in welcoming those in attendance and alluding to the challenges to find workable solutions to homelessness.

Recently the Government of Canada announced it has earmarked more than \$1 million in funding toward initiatives in the area through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) of the National Homelessness Initiative. The forum provided the opportunity to share their views on where progress has been made,

and where work is still required in order to help some of Halton's neediest citizens.

A number of participants identified a need for greater community awareness that homelessness is not just a big-city problem, and that it does exist in Halton Region.

"It could be us - many of us are just one pay cheque away," said one participant.

Other issues identified by participants included the need for a wider range of supportive housing, particularly for individuals with mental illness, housing for newcomers to

Canada, services for youth, and services that support the development of life skills such as budgeting.

Based on the community feedback from the meeting, Halton's SCPI Advisory Committee will update Halton's community plan, A Journey Home, which serves as the blueprint for housing initiatives in the region, and identifies priorities. Once the plan is revised and approved, Halton Region will issue a request for proposals from community groups seeking a portion of the federal funding for initiatives that are consistent with the community plan.



GRAND OPENING: Dollar Stretcher Daze held its Grand Opening on Saturday Nov. 1. To help celebrate, Heather Wedlake, Sarah Wedlake, Linda Ann Hush and Karen Lemme held a BBQ with all proceeds going to the Acton Sports Action Park. - Danielle McIsaac photo.

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While on foot patrol in Acton I have noticed local residents both inside banks and at ATM machines, making common safety errors.

When cashing a cheque or withdrawing cash from an ATM, count the money away from other customers and onlookers. The amount of money you have is nobodies business but your own.

You shouldn't carry cash in your hands. That's to tempting for a thief, they will simply grab the money and run.

Place the cash in a pocket or some other safe place on your person.

Ladies should not carry large sums of cash in their purses. Purses are too easily stolen. This is especially true when out shopping. Thieves have been known to steal a purse or the cash it contains, by simply distracting the shopper.

Never leave your purse unattended when shopping.

Be aware of your surroundings when you go to an ATM. If you see something suspicious, or even feel uneasy,...walk away. There are lots of other ATM machines.

When using an ATM take your bank card and ALL your paperwork with you, thieves have creative uses for any scraps of personal information they can obtain.

Don't let someone else enjoy spending your money.

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BY ARLENE BRUCE FOR ENA GIBSON

A Memorial Book for members who have passed away has been placed in the lounge for you to look at and remember. Thank you, Julie Conroy, for getting this completed.

Bid Euchre on Oct. 30 produced a mooner each for Chris Robertson, Doreen Malcolm and Shirley Hunter.

Mark your calendar on the following dates so the events won't be missed:

Nov. 10, Mon. 1:30 p.m. "Heads Up" with Bill Rowley, a regular on City Line TV Men, women, get some tips from a pro for the "bad hair days."

Nov. 17, Mon. 1:30: Tree Trimming Party. Enjoy a social time while you nibble, trim and visit. It's not too soon to catch the Christmas spirit.

Nov. 22, Sat. 11 a.m.: Christmas Bazaar & Tea. Talk to Marion Storey if

you're able to assist in any way. It's coming up very soon. Plan now for your bake table specialty offerings.

Nov. 23, Sun. matinee: "Cabaret" Globe Theatre's lively annual musical showcase at the John Elliott, with possibly dinner out to follow. Call 853-5951 if you are interested in joining a group attending from the Centre.

Nov. 24, Monday: Shopping trip to Dixie Outlet Mall. If there are 20 or more people going then the cost will be \$10. Sign up at the Centre to enjoy this trip.

Nov. 25, Successful Aging/Healthy Living presented by Dr. Christopher Ericksson. This promises to be a lively afternoon's event. Do any of us know everything there is to know about this vital topic. Plan to bring friends and join us.



HAPPY HELPERS: Madeline Lee and Jackie Oldham volunteered at the craft table at the St. Alban's Bazaar and Tea on Saturday Nov. 1. - Danielle McIsaac photo.