

Catholic board 'not concerned with safety', says parent after busing plan turned down

Continued from pg. 1

Georgetown West resident Christina Huras, whose daughter walks to the new high school, was very disappointed when she learned of the staff recommendation Tuesday afternoon.

"Obviously they are not concerned about the safety of students," said Huras who was one of the parents who spoke at the last board meeting. "They're not concerned about the uniqueness of Georgetown and that's very sad."

Reasons given by the parents for providing a bus to the Georgetown West students were that Georgetown has no town busing, equity for all students and the fact a precedent had been set by providing busing for students in Georgetown South, the time and distance it takes for kids in the Georgetown West area to walk to the school and several safety issues such as the lack of a sidewalk along a 1 km stretch of Hwy. 7 and the steep curving roads students have to walk to get to school.

However, board staff is recommending the withdrawal of busing from Georgetown South to remain consistent in their policy and to save \$124,500 a year in busing costs.

At the meeting, Huras showed a video of the route the students, many lugging 20-30 lbs of books, take to the school.

"The solution we proposed was

not going to cost the board any more revenue," said Huras. "All the board had to do was show some flexibility in their policy."

Several reasons were provided in the staff report for not supporting the request from the Georgetown West parents.

"Although walking distance has been identified as a concern, the board's policy reflects a radius and does not consider the actual walking distance for students," it was stated in the report. Based on the board policy anyone within a 3.2 km radius of the school is expected to walk.

"Perhaps the school board should look at that (the radius) and determine if that makes any sense at all," said Huras. "Who comes up with this radius."

The report went on to say that the availability of municipal transit is not a criteria used by board staff when establishing eligibility for transportation, and that staff believe there are no traffic and safety hazards on the walking route.

The report also stated the Halton District School Board doesn't provide transportation for their Georgetown High School students



IRENE McCAULEY

from the area and "acquiescing to this group" would put pressure on that board for similar services.

Creating a new bus stop in that area would be considered a policy exception and that would set a precedent, the report read.

On Tuesday afternoon, Halton Hills Trustee Irene McCauley said she was "totally against" not providing busing for Georgetown West and eliminating busing for Christ the King students in Georgetown South.

"I will be speaking to that this evening (Tuesday)," said McCauley.

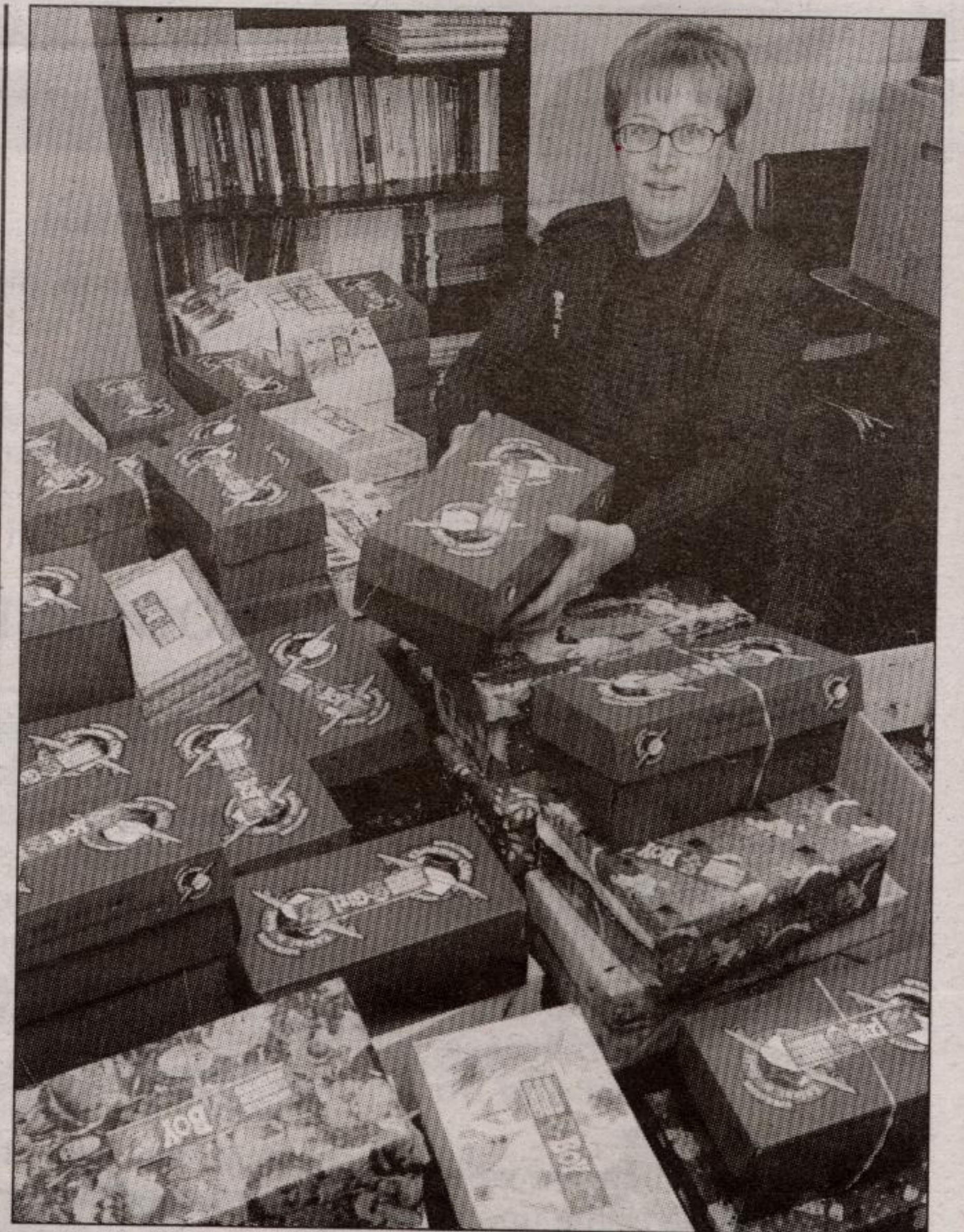
McCauley said she was going to ask what the ramifications of full busing would be for Georgetown West, but if someone on the board who opposed her original motion to provide busing for that area in August does not support putting it on the table again that issue can't be reopened.

If that's the case, McCauley said she will see if she can put forward a motion at the meeting to make an exception to the board's transportation policy to provide busing for the 13 children in Georgetown West.

Huras said she hopes trustees support the Georgetown parents request.

"Hopefully they're representing the students and the parents," said Huras.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



Boxed in

Karen McKenzie Stepler, director of Halton Hills Speech Centre, checks out some of the shoeboxes collected as part of the centre's participation in Operation Christmas Child, a program organized through Samaritan's Purse, which gives a shoebox full of items needy children throughout the world who have suffered because of war, natural disaster, poverty, illness or neglect. Halton Hills Speech Centre is committed to paying the \$5 shipping and handling for each shoebox donated and brought to the Centre. This year, with the help of staff, clients and the Halton Hills community, the clinic has forwarded 215 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.

Photo by Ted Brown

Safety is Child's Play



Protect your child from dangerous situations on the playground by following these safety tips:

- Always supervise children at the playground.
- Make sure children are playing with age-appropriate equipment.
- Ensure that a soft surface surrounds all playground equipment to cushion potential falls.
- Check all equipment to make sure it is firmly anchored and functioning properly.

Zellers

Important Infant Safety Hazard Notice

Zellers has learned of a potential safety hazard with Truly brand baby pacifiers sold at Zellers stores across Canada beginning in February 2002.

While there have been no reports of injuries, the plastic components of the pacifier can come apart and pose a potential choking hazard to infants and young children.



The pacifiers were sold in packs of two and available with latex and silicone nipples. Latex pacifiers made of opaque plastic come in various three-colour combinations of pink, yellow, purple, green and blue. Silicone pacifiers made of translucent plastic come in various three-colour combinations of purple, pink, blue and green.

Zellers has removed all Truly brand baby pacifiers from its stores and urges customers to stop using the pacifiers immediately and return them to any Zellers store in Canada for a full refund.

Zellers takes its commitment and responsibility to its customers seriously, with respect to all of its private brand items. Should the Company discover a problem, it will take appropriate measures to bring the matter to the attention of customers and to correct the situation.

For more information please contact:
Zellers Customer Service at 1-888-226-2225



From left: Mitch's son Matthew, Mitch, MPP Jean Augustine, Corporal Peter Kidd

Congratulations Mitch
on receiving the Commemorative Medal for your significant contributions in the Etobicoke/Lakeshore riding. Your family and friends are very proud of you and your accomplishments.