



## Mayor on the run (for a good cause)

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette leads a trio of runners around Gellert Community Park Saturday during the SuperWalk (and Run) for Parkinson's disease. Approximately 60 participants took part in the second annual event and organizers were hoping to raise more than \$12,000 to aid in research of the progressive, neurodegenerative disease.

Photo by Trish Wilkinson

# Longtime high school cafeteria workers want answers to why they aren't working

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well as at Christmas and March break— due to a shortage of work. They get a record of employment when that happens which has two boxes that indicate the employee will be returning or won't be returning. Four of their records indicated they would be returning, the other four had neither box marked.

In June, the cafeteria staff was called into a meeting with Maruya. They thought it was regarding their year-end luncheon but instead they were told they would have to reapply for their jobs for the following school year and that interviews would be held in July.

"I had never applied for my job (each year). They always called me back," said one of the cafeteria workers who had worked at the school for close to a decade.

Two of the employees said Maruya told them in the meeting the reason they had to reapply was because there had been conflict.

"When we asked him, 'What conflict?' he couldn't give us an answer," said one of the former

employees. "There was absolutely no conflict. We don't why we're not working there."

All eight of the cafeteria staff reapplied but despite having a combined 100 years of experience between them—including one who had been working in the school's cafeteria for 26 years—none of them were called for interviews.

"We deserve answers," said a former cafeteria employee.

Beckett-Morton said the hiring of the new cafeteria staff was done at the school level so she could not comment on why none of the women received interviews. And because it is a personnel matter she could not comment on the reasons the cafeteria staff was not asked back.

"There's a new principal in place and he is looking at number of things, and this is one of the things he's decided," Beckett-Morton said, adding that it "is not just the principal's decision. It was supported by senior administration."

While most schools contract their cafeteria to outside compa-

nies, GDHS is the only Halton school that operates its own cafeteria. Profits are used for equipment or school projects.

"I take pride in my job and in knowing that the money is going back into the school community," said one of the former cafeteria staff and a former student at the school.

Maruya's Labour Day e-mail also said, "Please contact...the payroll department at the Halton District School Board towards the end of the week, if you require any paperwork or information on severance if applicable."

Three weeks later, only three of the eight have received any paperwork from the board, leaving the others unable to apply for unemployment insurance or pursue other work.

"Not only are they punishing them financially, they're punishing them in not helping find future employment," Villella said.

Beckett-Morton said all the employees will be receiving their paperwork.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

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