

Health Care



Food bank presents prizes

The Georgetown Bread Basket recently announced the winners of its fund-raising raffle in which the local food bank raised \$3,408. Susan Tupling (left) of the Bread Basket, and Bread Basket director Marian Viant (right) presented Joan Templeton (centre), of Toronto, with Robert Bateman's *Winter Barnyard*. Bruce Cunningham was the winner of the second prize, *Bathing Blue Jay* by Seery Lester. The paintings were donated by Picture Picture, located in the Georgetown Market Place.

Photo by Yves Desjardins

Crocus Campaign

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind needs volunteer help for its annual Crocus Campaign. Selling or delivering crocus flowers at Georgetown Hospital on Friday, Feb. 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Take a four-hour shift or more. Funds raised go to help someone cope with vision loss. Info: Carolann Ritcey, 905-808-4VOL (4865) or e-mail carolann.ritcey@cnib.ca

Volunteer visitor

Make a difference in a lonely senior's life? VON needs caring men and women to visit seniors in the community, for as little as an hour a week. Volunteers are matched on a one to one basis. For more information call 1-800-387-7127, ext. 2317.

Schizophrenia support

A family support group for friends and family members affected by schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses is held by the Halton Branch of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario on Thursday, Jan. 26. This

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is caregiver support and information on resources available in Halton in a safe and non-judgmental environment. This group operates on a drop-in basis and is held the fourth Thursday of each month at Milton Mall, second floor boardroom, 55 Ontario Street South, Milton, 7 p.m. Info: 905-876-1647.

Ovarian cancer support group

A professionally facilitated drop-in support group for women with ovarian cancer is offered on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Wellspring Halton-Peel, 2545 Sixth Line, Oakville. Info: 905-257-1988. A Lung Cancer Support Group is also held at Wellspring Halton-Peel for lung cancer patients and their families on Tuesdays. Info: 905-257-1988.

Connection between poor dental health and poverty concerns Health Dept.

In Ontario, about one in every five children lives in poverty. For these children in particular, oral health is a concern because tooth decay is more common and severe among low-income groups. Children from low income families experience a higher number of decayed teeth than do children who live above the poverty level.

Access to regular dental treatment is something that many people take for granted. In Halton Region, about 82 per cent of residents reported that they had gone to a dental office at least once in the past year. But children from low income families are less able to access dental care because, unlike medical care, it is not covered by government health insurance. As a result, lower income persons have fewer regular dental visits, tend to visit dental offices for emergencies only, and receive fewer preventive services. Lower income persons are also more likely to rely on public assistance programs that provide limited dental services for example, extractions and fillings.

Although financial reasons are the primary barrier to accessing dental care, even children from families who have dental insurance may not receive adequate care.

Barriers to dental care go beyond economics, and may include:

- lack of knowledge of parents and other caregivers regarding the importance of dental care,
- language and cultural differences,
- dental anxiety and phobia,
- problems in locating or traveling to a dental office.

Poor oral health can lead to severe pain and suffering. However, good oral health is more than the absence of pain and dis-



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ease. Oral health plays an important role in a person's overall health and well-being. Dental health problems can cause poor eating habits, speech problems, expensive dental treatment, problems with school, and can impair the growth and development of children. Problems with oral health can affect a person's ability to function, his or her quality of life, and the life of his or her family.

Halton Region provides financial assistance programs to cover dental care for those who qualify. People who may qualify include:

- children and youth under 18 years of age who have a dental condition,
- Ontario Works recipients who have an urgent dental condition, and
- adults with special needs, and the frail elderly.

To determine whether individuals are eligible, they must first be assessed by the Health Department and have a financial need. Assistance is for individuals who do not have dental insurance or any other coverage and who would have difficulty paying for dental treatment.

For more information on child oral health call the Halton Region Health Department at 905-825-6000, TTY 905-827-9833, Toll Free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), or visit www.halton.ca.

Health Notes is prepared by staff of the Halton Region Health Department.

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