

# HEALTH CARE

## MADD's new execs to bring personal experience to the job

**HOWARD MOZEL**  
Special to The IFP

MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) Halton-Peel has received a much-needed boost with the appointment of two police officers as president and vice-president.

Toronto Police Sgt. Larry Zimmerman, a life-long Burlington resident and a married father of five, now heads up the agency. Halton Regional Police Const. Andy Dennis, a married father of one also living in Burlington, is his right hand.

Together, they've seen the impaired driving issue from the streets to the courtrooms and armed with this experience— some of it eye-opening, much of it tragic—the chapter can't help but benefit.

After all, MADD Halton-Peel has been struggling against financial pressures and a dearth of volunteers and has had difficulty delivering all the programs and services that staff feel the community deserves.

In short, it needs money and volunteers if it is to survive as an effective defense against the horrors of impaired driving— not an easy task, considering the chapter serves two regions with a combined population of roughly 1.6 million people.

As a result, both Zimmerman and Dennis say that, in addition to continuing to get the anti-drunk driving message out to the public, their immediate focus will be on attracting board members and volunteers plus raising funds so the chapter can carry out its mandate.

Both officers have simply seen too much not to try: twisted wreckage, shattered lives and a court system that is often too lenient considering the horrific damage involved. Both men have also heard every excuse in the book and wish they could get across to every driver that being drunk and being impaired are not the same thing. Both are chargeable offenses.

"No one thinks they're drunk, but even if you don't blow over 80, you can still be impaired," said Dennis, adding that marijuana is another growing problem affecting the safe operation of vehicles. "That's a new one ... that makes reaction time slower."

Another sore spot with Zimmerman is that some judges don't take impaired driving as seriously as they should, especially when no one has been injured and they see it as a "victimless crime."

The sad part, says Dennis, is that drunk driving is entirely preventable. Both he and Zimmerman recall stories of attending collision scenes and smelling the alcohol-tainted blood amidst the crushed metal. They have also attended autopsies of people who are literally dead drunk and smelled the booze.

"As soon as they cut the chest open, boom," said



New MADD Halton president Larry Zimmerman, right and vice-president Andy Dennis are both police officers. They see an important need for this group and an urgent need for volunteers.

*Photo by Liesa Kortmann*

Dennis, who added that one drink is too many if you plan on driving.

Zimmerman joined MADD Halton-Peel in June 2005 after reading a story in the local press about the agency's dire need for board members and volunteers. He hopes to bring all his experience — from police officers to victims— to bear on impaired driving in the regions.

Dennis decided to join MADD last year for several reasons: his wife's friend was killed by a drunk driver in Calgary and in his role as police officer he's laid far too many drunk driving and impaired charges— with no end in sight.

"Complacency is a huge problem," he said, explaining that he and Zimmerman volunteered for the executive positions with MADD and encourages other community-minded individuals to think likewise. "People have to step up. It's a great organization." Also welcome are high school students who can apply time spent with MADD to their community service hours.

For more information or to volunteer, contact MADD Halton-Peel at 9055-844-0096 or e-mail [info@maddhalton.ca](mailto:info@maddhalton.ca), [www.maddhalton.ca](http://www.maddhalton.ca) or drop by the MADD office at 466 Speers Rd. Suite 5B Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

## Local woman leads A Stroke of Power

Georgetown resident, Lauren Boyce, is organizing A Stroke of Power, a walk to raise awareness about people with disabilities' ability to do anything they want on Saturday, May 27 and Sunday, May 28.

Participants will start from the Halton Hills Civic Centre and walk the 28 kilometres to Erinoak Children's Centre, 2277 South Millway Dr. in Mississauga, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Boyce, herself, will walk the distance one way on Saturday, and return on Sunday.

Boyce is seeking pledges, donations and/or sponsors: Lauren Boyce, 36 Joycelyn Crescent, Georgetown, Ontario. L7G 2S4; [boycelauren@yahoo.ca](mailto:boycelauren@yahoo.ca); 905-877-8837. Make the cheques payable to Erinoak Children's Centre.

Erinoak is a place for families with special needs children to come and receive services such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, counselling, and speech therapy. There are also doctors there. There are several groups that Erinoak hosts as well, such as annual barbecues, monthly YAC meetings, mentorship training and pairing, Healthy Sexuality and the Advocacy Group just to name a few.

"Erinoak has given me a lot," said the 23-year-old Boyce, who suffered a stroke at age 9. She is now a Humber College student.

"I am very interested to speak at schools regarding this issue," said Boyce. "Anything can be done when you put your mind to it. All it takes is determination, motivation and willingness to achieve the goal that you want. In short, life is all we have, so let's make the best of it."

### First Aid, CPR course offered in May

A Canadian Red Cross Standard First Aid & CPR two-day course will be held on Saturday, May 13, and Sunday, May 28, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Oxford Learning Centre, Georgetown. The cost is \$105 and includes First Aid Vital Link Manual & certification card)

This is a full CPR certification course, includes infant, child and adult CPR - level "C". You will learn basic first aid for cuts, scrapes, wounds, fractures, strains, sprains, impaled objects, nosebleeds, and allergies-epipens. Signs and symptoms of sudden medical conditions such as stroke, heart attack and much more. To register, call Catherine, a Canadian Red Cross authorized provider, 905-877-4490.

### Wellness and Craft Day

Georgetown Lioness Club holds its annual Wellness and Craft Day on Sunday, May 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Georgetown District High School. More than 55 vendors on site. Raffles, draws, treats and baked goods, bbq. Admission free. Proceeds to the Georgetown youth centre.

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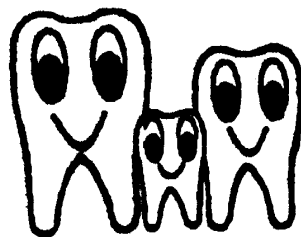
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