

OPINION

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Unexpected danger

A Canadian Medical Association report released last week paints a disturbingly unsafe picture of Canada's public playgrounds.

The CMA warns parks are dangerous places where thousands of unnecessary, preventable childhood injuries occur each year. How many?

Safe Kids Canada, a project of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, estimates playground injuries result in about 20,000-30,000 emergency room visits each year. More than a third of all treated injuries to children take place in public parks; while 67 per cent of injuries to children are caused by falls.

"Something as common as a drawstring on a jacket can put a child at risk of being strangled if it gets caught in playground equipment," said CMA President Dr. Colin McMillan. "But there is also just the danger of children underestimating risk and over-estimating their ability. Particularly with younger children, parents should always supervise playground visits."

While some playground accidents are the result of poorly-designed equipment and others are blamed on daredevil behaviour, the CMA maintains most playground accidents are avoidable. Parents need to stay close to small children— play along with them— and encourage older children to use equipment as it's intended.

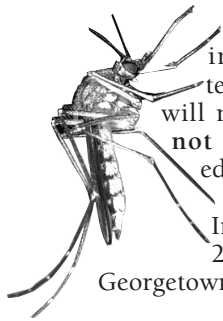
The Canadian Standards Association has voluntary standards for playgrounds and research shows they work when followed. In one Toronto study safe equipment was installed in 89 school playgrounds; while 229 schools kept older equipment. The schools with safer playgrounds reduced injuries by 49 per cent.

Local residents can help raise standards of local playgrounds by helping parent councils when they are fundraising for better playgrounds. The McKenzie-Smith Bennett parent council for example is having such an event tomorrow, 5-7 p.m. (See page 10). Its wooden playground was torn down last year due to safety concerns, and now more than 600 children are without a playground.

Buy a hot dog, and keep the children safe.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A hometown hospital makes the difference

Dear editor,

In this time of horror stories about our health care system, I'd like to share our story. It began January 20th when our mom, Annemarie Graf, had just been diagnosed with Pulmonary Fibrosis, a fatal lung disease about which not much is known. She was visiting us for the weekend to cheer her up. Saturday morning she experienced severe respiratory distress and our 911 call resulted in help within two minutes. The three paramedics were efficient, kind and knowledgeable— and they brought her to the Georgetown Hospital Emergency in next to no time.

In the following three weeks her condition stabilized and she was moved to the Complex Continuing Care Wing of the hospital. During the next six months Mom's condition altered numerous times— through Critical Care, Long Term Care, Complex Continuing Care and Palliative Care.

During each step of mom's journey we were impressed again and again to see the devoted, sympathetic and encouraging care the wonderful nurses bestowed upon not only our mom but on all the other patients we met along the way.

They cheerfully took each patient under their wing and made each feel special. Dr. Cherla was always on call and visited regularly.

As well, we want to applaud the cheerful kitchen staff, the caring vol-

unteers; the efficient cleaning maintenance staff — all ready with a story and a smile for our mother. Then there was Carrie devoted to entertaining her patients and the physiotherapists— ever positive, even when things were hopeless.

The lovely garden was a continuing joy for my mom who was so grateful for all her "guardian angels" and for her beautiful "room with a view". Mom always said she could not imagine ending up in a better

place.

My sisters and I were able to stay around the clock for mom's last five weeks and she loved to have us there with her. Sadly mom passed away on August 3rd.

My family and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to all these wonderful folk— we will never forget you or our six months at the Georgetown Hospital.

Linda Wheaton and family
Georgetown

There are nice people in this world

Dear editor,

There are still nice people in this world.

First, on Sept. 14 at 8 a.m. the doorbell rang and an employee from the regional waterworks department came to inquire about my schedule and how it would fit in my day when they could turn off the water.

Now is that considerate or what? I am a local dog groomer.

Secondly, that evening during the GO bus ride from Toronto to Milton, my wallet must have slipped out of my purse. Before I was able to drive home to Georgetown, a lady from the cleaning staff already called my house and mentioned the incident to my daughter, who went to collect the wallet.

Again this was extremely considerate and so nice to have such honest people.

I would like to thank the regional waterworks department and the GO service cleaning staff for making Thursday, September 14, a special day in my books.

Phil Boks, Georgetown

Camera is found

Dear editor,

A word of thanks.....

I was at the Croatian Centre on Sept 9, for the closing soccer day to watch my children play and misplaced my camera. Thank you so much to the person who turned it in to the organizers of the league.

Not only did you return a valuable camera, but there were a summer full of family memories on the data card. With much appreciation,

Sarah Ralston
Georgetown