

Boy swarmed in Hamilton

DANA BORCEA
Special to The IFP

A 13-year-old Georgetown boy visited Hamilton's Beach Strip with his family last week expecting some fun in the sun. Instead he got mugged in a swarming.

Mitchell Davison was riding his new bicycle up the waterfront trail Saturday (July 7) when the afternoon suddenly turned terrifying.

A teen he described as around 16 rode up alongside him and said he was having trouble breathing. He asked Mitchell if he had a cellphone he could use to ask for help. Mitchell slowed down and said he didn't.

"I thought he was in trouble," said Mitchell, who soon realized otherwise. The youth laid his bike down and walked out in front of Mitchell. He told him to get off his bike.

Instead, Mitchell, who had just received the new 21-speed mountain bike as an early birthday present from his parents, grabbed the handlebars and said no. He held on even as the youth began to shove him and try to shake him off the bike.

But Mitchell soon realized he was outnumbered when the boy was joined by four more teens who formed a line in front of Mitchell. And as they cycled away, pulling Mitchell's bicycle, the thief turned around to utter one last threat: "If you tell anyone you're dead."

Mitchell's mother Julie said she's grateful her son wasn't physically hurt but said the incident left her family shaken.

"We've rehashed it over and over again and don't know what we could have done differently," she said, adding the trail was busy with joggers and inline skaters. "It's not like we sent him down a dark alley."

The mugging is the latest in a string of recent

Mitchell Davidson looks at his brother Warren's 21-speed Schwinn, identical to his bike that was stolen when he swarmed in Hamilton.

Photo by Kaz Novak



attacks by groups of youths. Like the attack on Mitchell, most of these incidents appear to be unorganized and many involve a theft. Police stop short of calling the youth swarmings a trend but acknowledge it's a relatively new phenomenon.

Police Superintendent Ken Bond described the "cowardly" swarmings as mostly random and spontaneous. "It's certainly a crime of opportunity," he said, adding that MP3 players are a favourite target.

Tips for youth: Avoid becoming a target by keeping electronic and other expensive equipment out of sight; Whenever possible, try to avoid travelling alone

Tips for bystanders: Call 911 immediately; Do not place yourself in harm's way; Let culprits know that police are on their way.



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Before heading to the beach, you are encouraged to call Access Halton, Halton Region's customer service centre, to find information about the water quality at Halton's beaches. Beach monitoring information is available 24 hours a day by calling 905-825-6000 or toll free 1-866-442-5866. During regular business hours ask for beach information, after regular business hours press "2" for health information. This information is also posted on the Region's website at www.halton.ca/health.



Gary Carr
Gary Carr - Regional Chair

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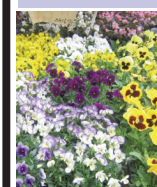
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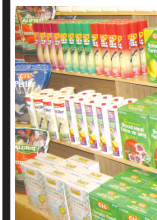
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