



Beating the blahs

Donna Adams of M&M Meat Shops in Georgetown put her best red nose forward Friday in celebration of M&M's annual campaign to fight the February blahs. Employees at more than 460 M&M locations across Canada donned red clown noses to celebrate and entertain customers. Since the tradition began in 1992, M&M staff have worn more than 40,000 red noses and tickled the funny bones of countless customers.

Photo by Ted Brown

Halton Region lends its support in call for national housing plan

Halton Region is voicing its support for a report released recently that calls for a national action plan to end homelessness and deliver affordable housing.

The document, put forward by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), asks the federal government for renewed funding commitments to address homelessness and affordable housing across Canada. It also highlights the troubling fact that federal housing funding expires in March 2009.

"I would like to congratulate the FCM for making their recommendations for a national housing and homelessness plan and continuing to draw attention to this important issue," said Regional Chair Gary Carr. "To help ensure that people of all incomes and at all stages of life have access to affordable housing, we need senior levels of government to provide sustainable and predictable funding."

The report follows the release by the FCM of the fourth in a series of theme reports as part of the Quality of Life Reporting System, which focused on how finding affordable housing remains a challenge for many Canadians.

The Region was one of 22 communities across Canada that contributed data and technical advice to the report.

Halton's Comprehensive Housing Strategy, endorsed by regional council in 2006, describes the need for a variety of housing types at a range of housing costs, including the need for assisted and affordable housing.

"Halton Region is at the forefront with our Comprehensive Housing Strategy, working to find housing solutions for people in our community, but getting long-term funding will be key," said Carr.

"Our Fairness for Halton campaign addresses the fact that Halton Region cannot accommodate growth targets specified in the Province's Places to Grow plan. Senior levels of government need to provide the

financial tools and funding commitments to address municipal infrastructure and social service needs, and that includes housing."

The FCM report, entitled 'Sustaining Our Momentum: Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness' is available through the FCM website at www.fcm.ca.

For more information about Halton's Comprehensive Housing Strategy visit www.halton.ca

EMS to show support for troops

Halton's emergency medical service (EMS) will soon be showing its support for Canada's troops by displaying yellow ribbon stickers on its vehicles.

Regional council approved the initiative at its meeting Wednesday. A report from Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal noted that Halton EMS has a personal reason to support the yellow ribbon campaign as Halton primary care paramedic Jonah Hirshberg is a medical technician with the 25 Toronto Field Ambulance of the Canadian Armed Forces reserve.

Hirshberg recently reported to the Canadian Armed Forces base in Petawawa for field training and will ultimately be serving in active duty as a medic for the Canadian military in Afghanistan.

The 'Support Our Troops' yellow ribbon campaign is a national program established by the Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency.

"By displaying the yellow ribbons we are acknowledging the personal sacrifices made by our front-line military personnel and their families and their dedication and professionalism in serving Canada," said Dr. Nosal in his report.

The yellow ribbon stickers will be purchased for all EMS vehicles for about \$250, which will be absorbed into the health department's 2008 budget.

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