

Recipe for disaster

A bleak picture—when it comes to the mental state of Halton's youth—was presented to Halton Region's Health and Social Services committee last week.

It's bad enough that one in five Ontario children struggles with an emotional, mental or behavioural disorder, but if you add to that this region's atrocious wait times for services you have a recipe for disaster.

The dire predicament of children's mental health services (or lack thereof) was presented to the Region by Ron Rodgers, executive director of the Reach Out Centre for Kids known as ROCK.

"The need for child psychiatry in Halton outweighs the capacity to meet it," Rodgers said in his presentation. He also noted that fewer than 25 per cent of kids with mental health issues are treated. Fewer than 25 per cent?

That's not acceptable.

Wait times range any where from three months for ROCK's community out-reach program to a year for its psychology services, occupational therapy and behaviour management program. A year's wait?

That's not acceptable.

ROCK receives funding from the Province, Region and United Way. It says it needs at least \$1 million more to upgrade salaries and annualized cost of living.

You have got to believe that with this region's unprecedented growth the demand for such services will also increase at an alarming rate.

This is the second time in as many weeks that we have received a frightening snapshot of the Region's lack or strained resources that deal with society's more vulnerable members. The health and social services committee was told earlier this month that one in 10 children arrive at school without any food.

That's not acceptable.

The Halton Food for Thought's student nutrition program is also buckling under the increase in demand said the regional manager of the program, Lena Bassford.

"We have to place a moratorium on any new programs," Bassford told committee members, adding, "This is devastating because for many children, the food they receive from Food for Thought is the only food (they'll get) the entire day."

Is this acceptable? We don't think so. Halton is a prosperous municipality. We can, and must, do better. The private corporate sector, as well as all levels of government, must team together to ensure our youth receive the care they deserve. Now that would be acceptable.

What do you think?

Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to www.independentfreepress.com

Which party would you vote for if a federal election were underway today?

- Progressive Conservatives (50%)
 - Liberals (10%)
 - NDP (10%)
- Green Party (30%)
- No party (0%)

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.

E-mail:

jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

Mail or drop off:

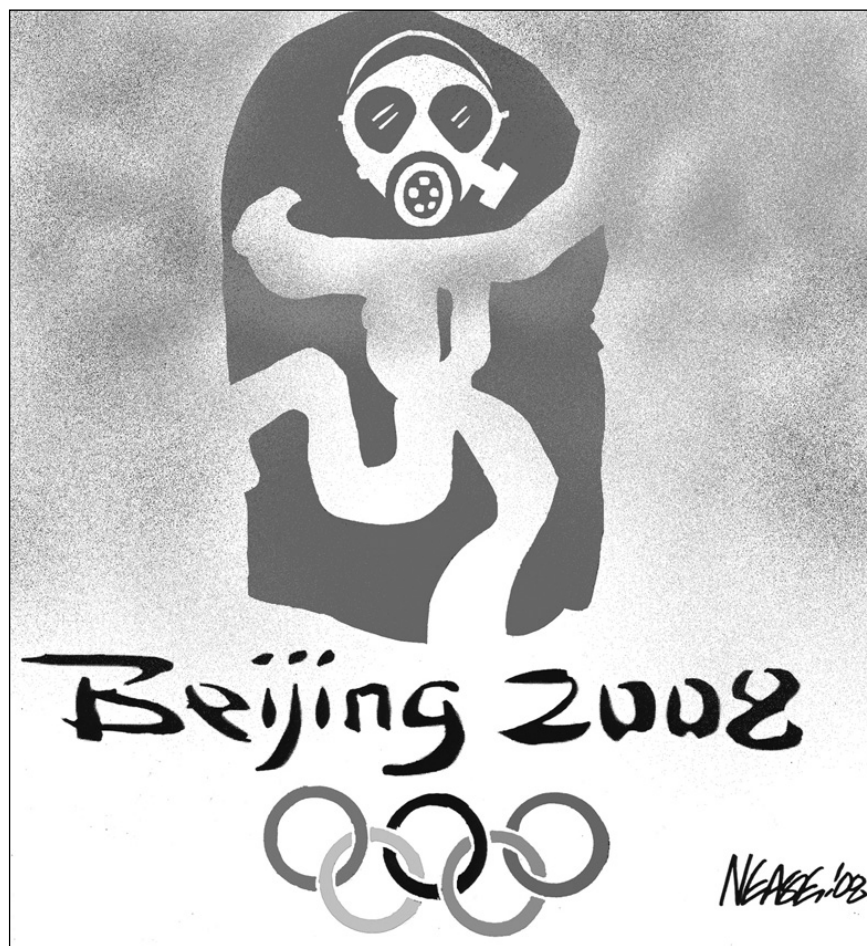
Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

The Independent & Free Press is published Wednesday and Friday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.



Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Province should support canning industry

(This letter was originally sent to Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott. A copy was made available for publication).

Dear Mr. Arnott,

I'm writing to voice my disappointment in the Ontario government's failure to support efforts to keep the canning industry viable in Ontario.

Co-op program faces placement shortage

Dear editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the employers in and around the Georgetown area for working with the Georgetown District High School Co-operative Education students.

With the increasing demand for workers with previous experience and students wishing to "test drive" a possible career choice, more students are realizing the importance of co-operative education. Increased demand for our program has resulted in a shortage of placements for our students, particularly in trade areas, interior design, marketing and retailing.

If there are employers in the area who wish to participate in our program, please contact the undersigned at wiesew@hdsb.ca or call the school 905-877-6966 ext. 235.

W. Wiese,

Co-op teacher/monitor
Georgetown District High School

It seems ironic to me that the federal government has recently revised consumer labeling, now making it possible to distinguish which food products in the marketplace are truly Canadian, and at the same time provincially we are reducing the availability of those same products. I do not want canned peaches grown in China, even if they are less expensive.

STEP/TEAM staff grateful for program support

Dear editor,

On June 20 the STEP and TEAM programs at Gary Allan High School, Halton Hills celebrated our fifth graduation and awards ceremony, at which we celebrated 22 graduates.

Once again, many of the local service clubs and businesses generously supported our programs throughout the year and enabled us to provide awards and post-secondary scholarships for many of our graduates and award winners.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our donors and sponsors for their generous and kind support:

Phone books not usable

Dear editor,

In the past year we have received at least two or three phone books and all have small print that most seniors cannot read, so they go right into the recycling bin.

Let's hope we can get one we can use and save a tree.

Shell Lawr, Georgetown

Furthermore, how does shipping food halfway around the world fit with reducing our impact on the environment? Now that we can be sure that "Product of Canada" means what it says, I would expect that more consumers will be checking for this on the label and yet sadly such product will become increasingly harder to find. Very strange.

Liz Thurston, Georgetown

A&P, A&W, Benix & Company, Coles, Curves for Women, The Freckled Lion, Georgetown Lionness Club, Georgetown Lions Club, Halton District School Board, Kiwanis Club of Georgetown, McDonald's Restaurants, Optimist Club of Georgetown, Pizza Hut, and Rotary Club of Georgetown.

The STEP/TEAM staff of Gary Allan High School, Georgetown Campus

Rotary Club says, 'thanks'

Dear editor,

The Georgetown Rotary Club would like to thank everyone who patronized our food tent at this year's Glen Williams Canada Day event. All proceeds will be donated to the Georgetown Bread Basket.

Our club would like to congratulate the Glen organizing committee for a successful Canada Day celebration. It was enjoyed by all!

Thank you to our local A&Ps and Tim Hortons for their generous donation. Hope to see everyone next year.

The Rotary Club of Georgetown

STAFF DIRECTORY

Publisher

Ken Nugent

Advertising director

Steve Foreman

(sforeman@independentfreepress.com)

Retail advertising manager

Cindi Campbell

(ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)

Managing editor

John McGhie

(jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

Distribution manager

Nancy Geissler

(distribution@independentfreepress.com)

ADVERTISING

Advertising co-ordinator

Jennifer Christie (jchristie@independentfreepress.com)

Retail Sales:

Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@independentfreepress.com)

Brendan Louth (blouth@independentfreepress.com)

Amy Sykes (features@independentfreepress.com)

Andrea Lefebvre (alefebvre@independentfreepress.com)

Brendon Stevenson (bstevenson@independentfreepress.com)

Real estate:

Sue Spizziri (realestate@independentfreepress.com)

Classifieds:

Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)

ACCOUNTING

Rose Marie Gauthier, Michelle McEachern

EDITORIAL

Cynthia Gamble: News editor

(cgamble@independentfreepress.com)

Ted Brown: Photography

(tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer

(ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports

(emaher@independentfreepress.com)

PRODUCTION:

Mary Lou Foreman, Kevin Powell,

Shelli Harrison, Dolores Black, Debbie MacDougall