

For our next trick...

In keeping with 'Houdini Day', Aden Galvao, 9, and Madison Sabatino, 8, made their very own rabbits in a hat as part of the Imagination Station program at Halton Hills Public Library. The programs are held at both the Acton and Georgetown branches, and more info on upcoming events can be found on the website www.library.hhpl.on.ca or by calling the library at 905-873-2681.



Photo by Ted Brown

Local student helping to build school in Kenya

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

While most teens are glumly getting ready to return to the classroom in just a few days, Stewarttown's Alexandra Bazinet is in Africa, hard at work on a unique school-related project.

The Grade 12 Christ the King student is one of about 75 youths from Ontario who are on a three-week trip to Kenya to build a school and teach classes for the native Maasai and Kipsigis children, who speak the Swahili language. The school is located on the edge of the continent's richest wildlife reserve, Maasai Mara, home to elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo and leopard, among other animal and plant life.

Organized by the international Leaders Today organization and the Toronto District Catholic School Board, Bazinet had to submit a lengthy application to be approved for the trip and took a monthly class in Toronto that will count towards one of the two high school credits to be earned as part of the three-week adventure. She was also required to get three vaccinations for diseases such as malaria, Hepatitis A and typhoid fever and studied those afflictions as well, along with other aspects of life in Africa.

"I thought it would be a great experience to go somewhere like Kenya

because I don't think many 17-year-olds can say they've been far away like that, and it's also for a good cause," said Bazinet, who aims to be accepted into the fashion and design program at Toronto's Ryerson University.

"It'll be hard work but I feel it'll definitely be worth it in the end. We'll be going on a safari, so that will be fun, and they say going to the market will be quite an experience."



ALEXANDRA BAZINET

Bazinet will teach a math class, which isn't part of the regular school curriculum for the Kenyans, but the building that's being constructed will have running water and electricity, considered a luxury in areas such as Maasai Mara.

"It's winter break over there for school, but the kids love to be involved with something like this so much they come out anyway—unless there's a drought, and they'll be off carrying water for their families," the Sudbury native said.

"There's an Olympic-style competition where we'll break the students up into teams representing different countries. Last year, they had it organized for about 60 kids and over 300 showed up from all over the place."

Leaders Today is a world-renowned youth leadership organization, providing innovative local and international training experiences to more than 350,000 teenagers each year.

Stats show most major crimes on the decline in Halton Region

Continued from pg. 1

The number of robberies in Halton also went down from 67 incidents in 2007 to 48 in 2008 while other violent crime dropped from 306 incidents in 2007 to 295 incidents in 2008.

Police also reported decreases in arson, auto theft and mischief for 2008, but noted some other types of crime are on the rise.

Sexual assault is up from 50 incidents in 2007 to 59 in 2008 while break and enters increased

from 716 incidents to 748 this year.

In the area of vehicle collisions the trend continued upwards with the Police Reporting Centre handling 1,318 vehicle collision reports during the first six months of 2008, a 26.9 per cent increase over this period last year.

Police reported impaired driving occurrences to be up 21.8 per cent from 2007 levels from 142 incidents in 2007 to 173 in 2008.

Fatal collisions were down slightly from 10 deaths to nine.

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