THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2010

THE NEW TANNER





GREAT GOALIE: Novice net-minder Matthew Adkins received the Best Goalie Award from Acton House League Hockey Tournament Co-ordinator Cathy Lee at the league's recent Day of Champions at Acton arena. – *Submitted photo*

SHARK BITE: The Active Choice Sharks downed Acton Optical Lightning 3-1 to capture the Ladies Hockey championship recently at Acton arena. - Charles Tysoe photo

Battling alcohol and drugs in the workplace

According to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, alcohol and substance abuse costs Ontario an estimated \$9.2-billion per year in health care, law enforcement and lost labour productivity. On Wednesday, April 28, the Halton Region Health Department will host a free workplace health networking meeting for representatives of local businesses. The workshop will offer potential solutions for dealing with the effects of alcohol and drugs in the workplace.

The meeting will be of interest to human resource professionals, occupational health nurses, union leaders, and health and safety and wellness committee representatives or anyone who would like to see a healthy change in their workplace. The seminar takes place from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Halton Regional Centre in Oakville with registration and a continental breakfast scheduled prior to the meeting, at 8:30 a.m.

"Alcohol and drug use in the workplace impacts all employees and presents significant health and safety challenges," said Regional Chair Gary Carr. "This session offers an excellent opportunity to learn about prevention and management from an expert in the field."

Keynote speaker Barbara Butler is President of Barbara Butler & Associates Inc. Since starting her business in 1989, she has assisted governments, industry and labour associations, and private business in dealing with workplace substance abuse. A regular speaker at national and international conferences, Butler has published a book, Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace, as well as a series of articles supporting the need for a responsible approach.

The workplace health networking meeting will help organizations understand their roles in preventing negative impacts associated with workplace alcohol and other drug use, associated legal and addiction concerns, and alcohol and drug testing, while providing guidance on policy development and implementation, communications strategies and awareness, education and training programs. Attendees will also receive a

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resource package including printed materials, posters and literature on low-risk drinking guidelines.

According to Dr. Bob Nosal, Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region, the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines, developed by a team of medical and social researchers from the University of Toronto and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, specify the number of drinks people of drinking age can consume weekly to minimize risk.

"In general, drinking more than two standard drinks of alcohol a day, or more than a weekly limit of nine for women and 14 for men, can increase your risk for chronic disease," explained Dr. Nosal. "Chronic disease is responsible for a significant proportion of disability and death in Halton, and in many cases, is preventable. Ensuring a healthy workplace by having

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appropriate workplace substance abuse policies and supports in place, goes a long way to ensuring the health of employees, the overall success of an organization and the wellbeing of residents in our community."

Topics to be covered during the networking meeting include:

• The potential health and safety risks associated with alcohol and other drug use

Current use patternsImpacts at work

• How other employers across the country have addressed the issue

• Policy/program development process and key components of a balanced policy

• Communications, training and other implementation steps For more information,

to register for this ses-

sion, or to be added to the mailing list for future meetings, please contact Halton Region by dialing 311, 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), or TTY 905-827-9833 or visit our website at www.halton.ca/ workplacehealth.



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