



CHURCH SALE: Desiree Krout, 11, helped at the annual Ballinafad United Church garage sale and barbecue on Saturday. Proceeds will help with church programs and donations. — Frances Niblock photo

Students urged to 'decide to decide'

The group of 120 high school students at the "It's Your Voice!" Halton Youth Empowerment Conference definitely got their "daily intake of vision" last Thursday in Burlington. The students heard inspirational messages, learned practical advice about how to make an impact in their communities and took part in dynamic discussions about youth issues in Halton with the best in the business for youth advocacy.

"Vision" is one of the key ingredients in keynote speaker, Ryan Porter's Make Your Own Lunch program. The main ingredient is to "decide to decide," he said. He then reinforced the message with images of famous people such as Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates, Terry Fox and the Wright Brothers as his backdrop. "The

people who have what they want, have it because they decided to."

Throughout the rest of the day, three representatives from Me to We - sister organization to Craig Kielburger's Free the Children - also taught the youth how to run effective social justice campaigns by tapping into their passions, drawing on emotion and using strong, powerful images to make an impact on the audience. Influencing public policy was the theme of the two facilitators from YATI (Youth Advocacy Training Institute). They gave feedback about the steps to take, questions to ask and who to engage in the community to have their voices heard, and encouraged the youth not to give up. Finally, the hosts of the conference, the Halton Regional

Youth Advisory Committee (HRYAC) members, generated lively discussion around some of the top issues facing youth in Halton: drugs, alcohol, bullying, mental health, body image, and sexuality and relationships. The youth voted on what they think the most pressing issues are and offered suggestions about what can be done to help youth make positive choices.

Regional Chair Gary Carr also encouraged the youth to be the "leaders of today" by sharing his personal career history. "I went from playing hockey to being involved in all levels of politics," he said. "So you never can tell where you'll end up or how you'll make a difference. There are so many opportunities for you in Halton. So enjoy today's event!"

No Halton Hills date for anti-drug advocate

Anti-drug advocate Paul Christie is holding a series of sessions this week in Halton to hammer home the message to students to avoid the trappings of drug and alcohol abuse.

Christie, who had spent two decades fighting the struggles of addiction, will share his inspirational story and provide tips and strategies for parents, guardians and students on how to avoid becoming involved with drugs and alcohol.

Christie will appear at schools in Burlington, Milton and Oakville.

"Like many communities, we are concerned about substance abuse in Halton and a lack of understanding of the impact of using some drugs, like

marijuana and prescription drugs, and the affect on students, their families and their futures," says Odette Bartnicki, Superintendent with the Halton District School Board.

According to Christie's website, 20 years of drug and alcohol abuse led to a life of crime, homelessness, cheating, stealing, lies, deception, begging for food and waking up in ditches. In 1999, he took control of his life and checked into a rehabilitation clinic. Since then he has turned his life around and has dedicated his time to steering youth from abusing drugs and alcohol.

Christie is not scheduled to speak at Acton or Georgetown high schools.

Earth keepers get a \$9,000 donation

The Halton Learning Foundation (HLF) is pleased to announce TD Friends of the Environment Foundation's (TD FEF) generous donation of \$9,000 to the Bronte Creek Project's Earthkeepers Program, through Halton Learning Foundation.

Michael Craig, a high school teacher at the Bronte Creek Project said, "the Earthkeepers Program is a dramatic ecology program, partnering dozens of Halton high school students with hundreds of elementary students; spending time outside and connecting with nature. "The Program makes it possible for these students to make small changes in their own lives to reduce their environmental impact, and be inspired to make a difference when they return to their own schools."

"The TD FEF grant helps to purchase supplies for this Program, which fosters a connec-

tion between elementary students and high school mentors through environmental leadership. The younger students look up to the high school students as role models; in turn, the leaders gain confidence and leadership experience as they guide groups through various outdoor ecology activities," said Craig. "We are very grateful for this support, and know that it will make a difference in the lives of student leaders from almost every school in the Halton Public and Catholic School Boards."

"At TD, our focus is on three pillars: children's health, education and literacy, and the environment," said Ruth Lee, of TD Canada Trust. "There is no project that we have funded through the Halton South Chapter of TD Friends of the Environment that exemplifies these three pillars better than the Bronte Creek Project. Having seen first hand the impact

this environmental educational program has on the youth of Halton, it is clearly satisfying to provide funding to enable this type of endeavour to continue."

"We would like to thank TD FEF for partnering with the Halton Learning Foundation to support and promote environmental education for Halton students," said Mike Shepherd, Board Chair of the Halton Learning Foundation.

Since 1990, TD FEF has provided more than \$53-million in funding to over 19,000 grassroots environment and wildlife projects across Canada. In 2009, TD FEF provided more than \$4.1 million in support of 899 projects. Thousands of donors give to TD FEF on a monthly basis and TD Bank Financial Group contributes in excess of \$1-million annually. For more information on how to donate and get involved in your community, visit www.tdfef.com.

Acton
EVERY SATURDAY STARTING MAY 29
TRUNK SALE

Vendors \$10 Admission

As always, **BARGAIN HUNTERS ARE FREE**

Gates Open at 7:30 a.m.

All vendors must be packed up by 1 p.m. - Please

Vendors are also required to remove all cardboard and unwanted items upon leaving.

We encourage you to attend every Saturday. Help make this our best and most prosperous year yet for both vendors and the community charities this event helps support.

Contact us at:

519-853-4299 or 519-853-1825

Email us at trunksale@live.ca

