

Poverty is a reality here in Halton

More than 13,500 children live in low-income households, writes Sabihuddin



SARAH SABIHUDDIN
Column

Imagine having to choose between buying diapers and food or paying the rent and hydro bill.

In Halton, there are more than 13,500 children living in low income households, representing 10.5 per cent of all children in our community. That is one in 10 kids living in poverty right here in our neighbourhoods.

This is why organizations like the Halton Poverty Roundtable (HPRT) are so important. Our members are regional change-makers who are challenging the complexity of poverty in our community. We work to shed light on all aspects of poverty and highlight the reality of poverty in our neighbourhoods. Through connecting, educating and acting together, we aim to reach the ultimate goal of eliminating poverty in Halton.

Over the course of the past eight years, the HPRT has been involved in raising public awareness on issues ranging from social assistance reform, to increasing awareness on available housing supports, to the successful inclusion of community benefits in publicly-funded infrastructure projects directly impacting low-

income residents.

Poverty looks different in every community, and Halton is no exception.

Poverty is a complicated topic to define, but even harder to solve. Halton residents living in poverty often have unstable employment, insecure and unaffordable housing, are food insecure, face chronic health issues, experience financial barriers to post-secondary education, and face social exclusion due to the gap that exists between the highest and lowest income earners in our community. A family of four with two adults working full time must earn a minimum of \$17.95 an hour to pay for the basic necessities of life so they can live with dignity and participate as active citizens in our society. Many in our community have to decide between paying their rent, buying fresh food for their children, and paying for necessary medication.

Halton Poverty Roundtable believes that everyone in our community should be adequately housed, with enough income to meet the most basic standard of living, allowing everyone to eat properly, live with less stress and engage with community supports.

If you, or someone you know, want to become more involved in achieving our vision of 'No Neighbour in Need' please check out our website at www.haltonpoverty-roundtable.com or on twitter @HaltonPovertyRT.

- Sarah Sabihuddin is the Halton Poverty Roundtable director of communication engagement.

SNAPSHOT

Shawna Reeve photo
Champion reader Shawna Reeve snapped this photo from her condo at James Snow Parkway during last Thursday's thunderstorm. Do you have a fun, cute, unique or interesting photo taken in Milton? Send your Snapshot submission to cohara@metroland.com. Please include a short description and the name of the photographer for publication.



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OPINION

The world needs more Canada

We need to be a moral compass for America, says Sheikh



MAQBOOL SHEIKH
Column

"Universe." When broken down, it's comprised of "uni," meaning one, and "verse," meaning song. One song being sung by one humanity.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau once described the relationship and closeness to America: when America sneezes, Canada catches a cold. True, we share a special closeness and bond with America.

It is time for Canada to help "Make America Great Again." Be the conscience that awakens misguided thinking and actions of a great people. Protectionism and bullying is often cloaking fear. Let's put our collective arms around them with love and compassion, guide them back to their natural inclination to do good - be good.

It is heart-wrenching, beyond humanity, that this great nation

not hoarded. Canadians understand all we have is temporary as none of us are taking any of the worldly goods with us when we die. Canadians understand when we give to others, when we assist others, when we welcome others, we are also helping ourselves.

As a Canadian Muslim, I know these are also Islamic values. I also know these are values shared by all religions. Knowing that all we have was given by God and being grateful to Him. We are reminded that governments are there to serve the people in a just manner, with grace and mercy. Islam reminds us that, eventually, we give account to God for our actions.

Let's assist our American friends to correct their ways.

Sign a petition (Change.org), speak to your MP to apply pressure via the United Nations and possibly even suggest Canada takes in some of these families. Take action.

- Maqbool Sheikh is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Canada's director of advocacy and public relations. Follow him on Twitter @thecndnmuslim.

could fathom let alone act to separate the children from the families of asylum seekers. How barbaric and unjust an act of political intent perpetrated on innocent lives. This is horrific; it's terrorizing seekers of a better life. The collective human conscience must stand up and apply pressure to initiate change.

Canada sets a gold standard in welcoming people to this great land with respect and honour. Honouring the humanity of each person, respecting their right to be treated fairly and access to wonderful God-given attributes of "grace" and "mercy." Canada understands the riches of the world are meant to be shared and

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