



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure

Relative to other centres nearby, Milton is not a very violent community, through no particular virtue of the town save for its size. But there is violence in Milton, and it exists in local schools just as it does elsewhere.

So today's lead article on the community page would probably be worthwhile reading for many of us. Framed within it are the comments of Stu Auty, who studies the causes of violence in schools, and how to avoid as much of it as possible.

Mr. Auty notes that schools today are generally more violent than they were 20 years ago, which is no surprise. Society is so inclined as well.

More people are disaffected in today's Canada, ethnic and racial tensions have been exacerbated, financial security is not what it once was for many, and communities are often fragmented, existing as such in name only within a faceless suburban sprawl.

In a circle of two dozen families, the number with a stay-at-home parent can usually be tabulated by counting on one's thumbs. In any gathering of adults one need only look a person to the left, then to the right, to find a someone whose marriage will likely end in acrimonious litigation.

For all that, though, as Mr. Auty stresses, an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure. The trouble with many of us is, however, we probably haven't made the former investment to avoid the latter cost.

And even if we have done so in our immediate families, the question remains — have we gone that extra mile to make sure somebody else's kids, less fortunate perhaps, have something approaching the same opportunity?

Let's face it, there are a lot of parents out there who need help with parenting, and a good many kids who need yet more assistance coping with dysfunctional families. Without people reaching out to them, they'll fall through the cracks, academically, socially -- in all sorts of ways.

As Mr. Auty pointed out, kids who don't get positive feedback in their home environment, plus opportunity there, will find some sort of feedback elsewhere, and some sort of opportunity — an opportunity that usually involves flawed judgment.

In an age of stress, pressure, downsizing and uncertainty, it's without question hard for many of us to muster the energy to take a genuine interest in the lives of the younger people around us. And, to be sure, dealing seriously and compassionately with the problems of the younger set can be time-consuming and frustrating. Today, perhaps more than ever, it's tough to do yet today, perhaps more than ever, it should become a higher priority for all of us. One need not look to far to examine what happens when entire sectors of the community go off the rails, and the consequences for younger people. Look at almost any inner-city school in the United States, or, perhaps more disconcertingly, compare today's pattern of violence in Canadian high schools with how things were when you attended. The disrepair into which a community can fall is everybody's fault much more so than it is some segment of that community's fault. People like Mr. Auty remind us of what we need to do to avoid that, and we should be listening.

Rob Kelly



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Students making a difference

Dear Editor:

Good news from Africa. Milton youth made it happen! Watching television can give the impression that Africa is filled with death and despair. Recent news tells of mass killings in Algeria and power struggles in Rwanda.

But the media often misses the positive stories such as the work in developing countries funded by students from the Milton area. Their participation in World Vision's 30-Hour Famine has helped save lives.

Despite the wars with their front page coverage, peace and stability is reality in some parts of Africa. The official end of apartheid in South Africa marked a milestone in the history of humankind.

In neighbouring Mozambique, millions of displaced people are returning home and rebuilding their lives after years of Civil War.

Mozambicans are rediscovering productivity through agricultural packages provided by local teens who support World Vision's 30-Hour Famine.

Improved health care saves the lives of millions who could have died from easy-to-treat intestinal viruses.

Life expectancy in Africa has increased from 40 to 51 years. Again, students from the Milton area have invested in these programs through World Vision's 30-Hour Famine.

This good news story does not grab headlines.

But, thanks to people who are willing to see beyond the flow of negative media coverage, we are making a difference.

Dave Toycon, president
World Vision Canada

Letters Welcomed

The Canadian Champion welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit, revise, and reject letters.

Mail letters to:

The Canadian Champion
Box 248,
Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9

Reader seeks house history

Dear Editor:

I have recently purchased the old concrete block house at 2 Third Sideroad in Milton Heights.

It was once a grand old house, but we have been unable to find any history on it. We do not even know when it was built other than it is 70 to 80 years old.

There have been extensive interior and exterior modifications done on the property.

We would very much like to know the original look of the house as we are planning many upgrades and restoration projects.

Any help your readers might be able to give will be greatly appreciated.

Please contact Mike Turner at 2 Third Sideroad, Milton, Ont. L9T 2W4, or call 878-0607.

M. Turner
Milton

Pud

by Steve Nease

