



Champion COMMUNITY Page

Reaching out to women who are isolated and vulnerable

By CLAUDIA D'SOUZA
Special to the Champion

What's it like to begin a new life in another land? It's not always the exciting journey some would believe it to be. Isolation, unfamiliarity with surroundings, a new way of life and language barriers all come into play and can make for a very difficult transition.

The Halton Rape Crisis Centre (HRCC) located at Hopedale Mall in Oakville, aims to ease this transition for women of diverse cultures through its Outreach Program. The program reaches out to Halton's ever-growing multi-cultural community to help women overcome the multiple barriers they face in getting support and services sensitive to their needs.

The Outreach Committee is made up of women who are actively involved in collaborating with other organizations and agencies in Halton, who care about women's issues and speak a variety of languages. The true cornerstone of the program is to inform the public, particularly cultural and ethnic communities, about the services available at the centre, and to educate on the issue of violence against women. Often, unaware of services available to them, some immigrant and refugee women live in isolation prone to the many faces of violence.

"Reaching the multicultural community is more difficult than reaching the mainstream," explains outreach worker Kerry Samuels. "Language is one of the obvious obstacles. They're dealing with basic issues; money, food, housing, education. Taking that step to feel welcome or to ask for help requires extra effort. The program is open to woman from all over Halton — not just Oakville."

"Sometimes in other cultures the man does everything outside the home and this leads to isolation, stress and guilt for the woman left at home. They're not encouraged to take control of their own lives. It takes double and triple effort to overcome these obstacles," agrees Outreach Worker, Ingrid Zollkofer.

"In six months, we have already had some great success stories of women returning to school and really connecting with other women. The emphasis is to empower and get control. It's open to all women — not just those who have been subjected to abuse. Often it is their first forum to open up and talk about issues important to them."

Advocacy within the system (welfare and the courts for example) on behalf of clients also falls under the centre's umbrella.

The Outreach Program's monthly meeting, accompanied by a pot luck lunch, is held every fourth Friday of the month and a regular drop-in is held every Friday between noon and 4 p.m. with free babysitting, tea and coffee provided.

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Taylor Nursery owners Barb (left) and Phil Lawton peek out of the brightest bug in town. The pair have received many comments since festooning the car with vivid garden-style artwork.

'Flower power' is back in style

Spring has been in bloom at Taylor Nursery since February.

That's when owners Phil and Barb Lawton unveiled their new company car — a brightly painted Volkswagen Bug.

"We wanted to do something different and they're such cute cars," said Barb Lawton of the blooming bug.

What they did was hire a Burlington airbrush artist to festoon the tiny car with flower, landscape and garden scenes.

The couple came up with the concept, which they shared with artist Ron Gibbs. They then left the artwork in his capable hands. It took about eight weeks to complete.

"He put it all together for us," said Ms Lawton. "It's one of

these traveling billboards."

The car made its debut at the large Canada Blooms show in February.

"People just loved it. They thought it was gorgeous."

The scenes are so intricate that people notice a new detail virtually every time they look at it.

"I find people go round, then go round again to find something new in it," said Ms Lawton.

Though the artwork was expensive, it was well worth it, she said. "It's a fun car. I really enjoy it. When people look at it, they just laugh. It's such a happy car."

For guitarists

Oakville's Appleby College offers a guitar summer workshop from July 11 to 16.

The program — open to musicians of all ages and skill levels — will be taught by world renowned guest artists and will feature all styles of guitar playing, including blues, rock and jazz.

The cost is \$650, which includes tuition, residence and meals. For more information, call Brian Murray at (905) 567-6813.

Reading fest for kids soon

Kids who love to read will fit in perfectly at the children's literacy festival at the Farm Museum Sunday, May 30.

Visitors will have the opportunity to meet 12 Canadian authors, illustrators and storytellers and enjoy readings, author signings and books at the event to promote literacy and the importance of reading.

Highlighting this year's festival will be an appearance by Steve Nease — who along with writing and drawing the Pud comic strip is a nationally known and syndicated political cartoonist.

The fourth annual 'I Love to Read — Milton's Literacy Festival for Children' will be held from 12:30 to 5 p.m.

The event is sponsored by the Town of Milton, Milton and Halton Hills public libraries and the Milton Community Resource Centre, with financial assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts through the Writers' Union of Canada.

Wagon rides around the 64-hectare museum on Townline Road, north of Steeles Avenue, will be held. Admission costs \$5 for adults. Children get in free.



86 Main Street,
Milton 876-1515

Attention all Gardeners!

Does the joy of gardening always seem to be accompanied by aches and pains?
Bending forward for long periods of time can strain your back.

- Keep your back straight
- Bend at your knees and hips when lifting, raking or digging.
- Protect your knees with your gardeners knee pads.
- If gardening pain persists, see a physiotherapist.

A helpful hint from the Canadian Physiotherapy Association and the Halton Community Rehabilitation Centre. For Physiotherapy Services Call... HCRC at 876-1515

