

Gap between the rich and poor is growing in Halton

A report on the quality of life in urban Canada indicates most Halton citizens enjoy a high standard of living, but the gap between the rich and poor has grown.

The results are contained in the second Quality of Life Report released last Tuesday by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

Halton data indicates a high quality of life exists for most Halton residents in a number of areas including high rates of employment and income levels and low averages for birth rates and lone parent families.

"We are pleased the report shows that Halton remains a great place to live," said Halton Region Chair Joyce Savoline. "But we are committed to meeting the needs of all

our citizens. Poverty is an issue affecting many communities, including Halton."

But the report found poverty and income inequality has continued to expand in large urban communities since the first Quality of Life Report was issued in 1999.

"These findings are truly amazing," said FCM President Joanne Monaghan. "They show that Canada's economic boom has not benefited everyone. Too many people have been left behind."

The data also shows the gap between the rich and poor has grown in Halton, a finding that's consistent across Canada.

"As Halton's population increases, there will be increased pressure to improve the quality of life for all our citizens," Ms. Savoline said.

"That includes poor seniors, people seeking affordable housing,

sole support parents and working poor whose income is insufficient for food and shelter costs. We must be diligent in continuing to respond to the needs of all out citizens and ensure that Halton remains a great place to live."

The Quality of Life Report uses a set of eight indicators that measure social and economic progress in Canada's cities. The report is intended to establish permanent benchmarks and monitor the well being of municipalities over time.

The results of the report are consistent with other recent studies on Halton. An Ipsos-Reid survey of Halton residents released earlier this month shows that most residents are pleased with the quality of life and services in Halton.

A copy of the FCM's Quality of Life Report 2001 is available on the FCM Web site at www.fcm.ca.

JK registration begins Thursday

• from LOCAL on page 3
two-and-a-half to five years exclusively. In a small community like Milton, the number of four year olds is limited so therefore our program will be affected in the fall."

A good number of the children going to JK next year will still come back to the centre after class ends, said Nicole Leece, an early

childhood education worker at Safe and Sound Children's Centre.

"We provide a bus from the schools to the daycare. So far, I haven't heard a lot of comments from parents. Most parents (who have children attending the daycare) have their kids in Junior Kindergarten through the Catholic school board. It's too early to say if

we're going to have a problem (with implementing JK)."

Milton public schools housing the JK program this year include Brookville, J.M. Denyes, Percy W. Merry, Robert Baldwin and Sam Sherratt schools.

Registration for the JK program will be accepted at the above schools beginning Thursday.

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