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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton District High School students Ashleigh Mule (left) and younger sister Rachelle work on labelling some of the 244 gift boxes assembled for needy children around the world.

## Local high school students spread some holiday cheer

By RICHARD VIVIAN  
*The Champion*

Milton District High School students took an early look at the holiday season last week, preparing gift boxes for needy children around the world.

"With all the awful things going on in the world these days, it's an opportunity for our kids in our little part of the world to reach out to kids in other areas of the world," high school principal Ian Jones told *The Champion*. "Our kids reaching out across those miles, I think, is a tremendous connection."

In four days, students and staff prepared 244 gift boxes and

raised \$1,720 in 'The Great Mustang Shoe Box Challenge'. Every class in the school participated.

Gift boxes and money will be distributed to children in countries suffering from natural disasters and/or times of war through the Samaritan's Purse organization.

The content of each box was essentially left to the students and teachers to decide, but the age and sex of the recipient were pre-decided.

Gifts ranged from small games and dolls to hygiene products and socks.

All contents were donated by students and staff.

"There wasn't a limit on what you wanted to put in, in terms of the expense or sophistication of it, it just all had to go in a shoe

box," Mr. Jones said.

This is the first year the school has participated in this annual campaign, and they had little notice to complete their boxes, explained Mr. Jones.

With last Friday as their deadline, staff and students first heard of The Challenge earlier that week.

"I've been in education .33 years — I've done this stuff lots of times — but to get this kind of response from this many people in such a short time, it's absolutely outstanding. I'm absolutely knocked out," Mr. Jones proclaimed.

With the size and swiftness of the schools participation this year, The Challenge will make a return run next year, Mr. Jones said. "There's no question about that."

## Group home bylaw amendment shelved following opposition

*Town staff directed to review bylaw, prepare a report*

By RICHARD VIVIAN  
*The Champion*

An amendment to Milton's group home bylaw was shelved Monday night after the Town's administration and planning committee heard concerns from local group home operators.

Town staff will now review the existing bylaw and prepare a report for council, including information on how other municipalities are tackling the situation. The report is expected to take about six months.

"When council gave staff the direction it did (to tighten the current bylaw), you perhaps didn't understand the impact it would have on people with intellectual disabilities," John Bedell of Community Living North Halton (CLNH) told the committee.

CLNH provides support and services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. It currently operates five group homes in Milton, serving 21 residents.

If approved, the amended bylaw would create new barriers for people with intellectual disabilities as it would be harder for them to find a residence, Mr. Bedell argued.

"These are people from the community who want to live and make their home here. Please don't put up these barriers."

Under the rules of the proposed bylaw amendment, group homes would have to be approved by council through site-specific zoning and a public meeting must be held with neighbours informing them of the intended purpose of the property.

Also demonstrating opposition to the bylaw was Julie Anderson of the Bob Rumble Association for the Deaf.

Ms Anderson told the committee that the wording of the bylaw amendment wouldn't only restrict individuals in where they live, it would also remove some of the organization's flexibility in services.

"Supportive independent living should not be considered a group home," she argued. "It is our intention to work with council to overcome these barriers."

In an attempt to clarify the intent of the amendment, Councillor Wally Hunter told the speakers council had only been looking for a way to regulate commercially-run group homes.

"The intent is not to exclude group homes like yours, but rather to provide some protection for homeowners in residential areas," he explained. "All residents have a right to know what commercial businesses are being established around them."

Concerns over the wording of the amendment were also received from Halton Region indicating the amendment isn't in line with the Regional Official Plan (ROP).

Because the amendment doesn't comply with the ROP, regional council approval would be required before the amendment could be instituted.

Town council still has to address the matter and is expected to do so Monday.

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- Friday, November 16 •
- A&P • Shoppers Drug Mart • Zellers • Walmart • IDA • M&M Meats • Cristello's Village Market • Canadian Tire • Harrop • Loblaws Insiders Report • Lazy Boy • Ennisclaire Interiors • Home Hardware • On Site Magazine • Bell World • Burlington Lighting Unlimited • Sears • Payless Shoes • Enbridge/Consumers Appliance • Radio Shack • White Rose

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