

Retired teacher is recognized for her passion to help others

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

Milton resident Linda Middaugh is a bonafide believer that one person has the power to make all the difference in the world.

It's a belief that comes with a responsibility, though, since there's no ignorance to permit inactivity.

Last Tuesday, as she was presented with the Humanitarian Award for a non-member by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ms Middaugh was honoured for her actions which, over the years, have improved scores of lives.

Ms Middaugh, a retired teacher who taught at Sam Sherratt Public School before her retirement two years ago and at E.W. Foster Public School before that, is a woman with a passion to help others.

"Sometimes the problems of this world seem so overwhelming I think, 'What can I do?' But that's not true. We have to fight against that."

Ms Middaugh, who's considered a non-member of ETFO since she's retired, is a member of the board of directors of Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton. She's also actively involved in WHAM (Women in Halton Action Movement).

But she's perhaps best known for her efforts with Canadians in Support of Afghan Women (CSAW), a local affiliate of the national group Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan.

In a nutshell, the group is committed to raising awareness and money to assist the women of Afghanistan in their struggle for human rights.

Ms Middaugh assists with fundraising efforts to support the Nazoo Anna Girls School to ensure girls there have access to the education denied them under the Taliban regime.

"Linda is a Canadian with a vision that goes beyond her own daily life," said Emily Noble, president of ETFO, at the federation's annual meeting in Toronto. "She is making a significant difference in the lives of others. She demonstrates how one dedicated and inspirational person can make a difference."

A Milton resident for almost 30 years, Ms Middaugh became involved with CSAW about five years ago, just after it was formed.

Although Afghanistan has become a hot discussion topic since 9/11, the group was created before that.

"The group was formed before 9/11 — before it was in the news and it became the thing to be doing," Ms Middaugh said.

She first became interested in helping Afghan women, she said, after reading an article about their plight in a women's magazine by Oakville journalist Sally Armstrong.

"I'll never forget reading that article by

Sally. I remember I turned to my daughter and said, 'We have to do something.' I found out about this group (CSAW) and thought, 'This is the group for me.'"

Her involvement has been like a full-time job since she retired. But, she said, it's worth every minute.

She hopes to soon travel to Afghanistan to visit the schools the group supports and meet the principal and staff members.

Asked to describe herself in two words, Ms Middaugh replied, "Passionate and pushy."

She added: "We all have the power to do something small and get together with other people who feel the same way."

Naturally, there are times when she feels frustrated and wishes she could make more of a difference.

"Sometimes I think, 'Is this ever going to get better?' That's human nature. But then I get that e-mail (from Afghanistan) saying, 'Thank you for the \$1,000' and I pick up again."

For more information on CSAW, call (905) 825-3622, or e-mail savis@savi-sofhalton.org.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



Linda Middaugh



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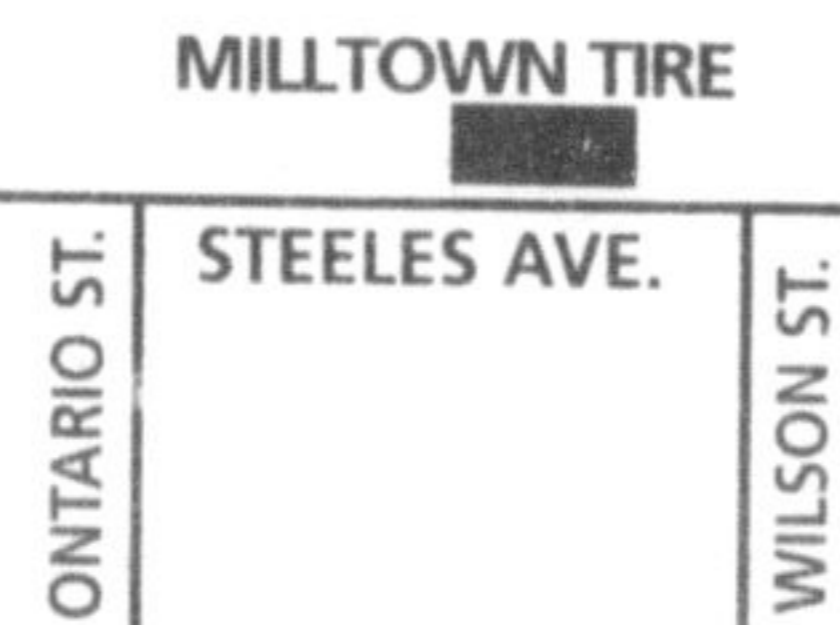
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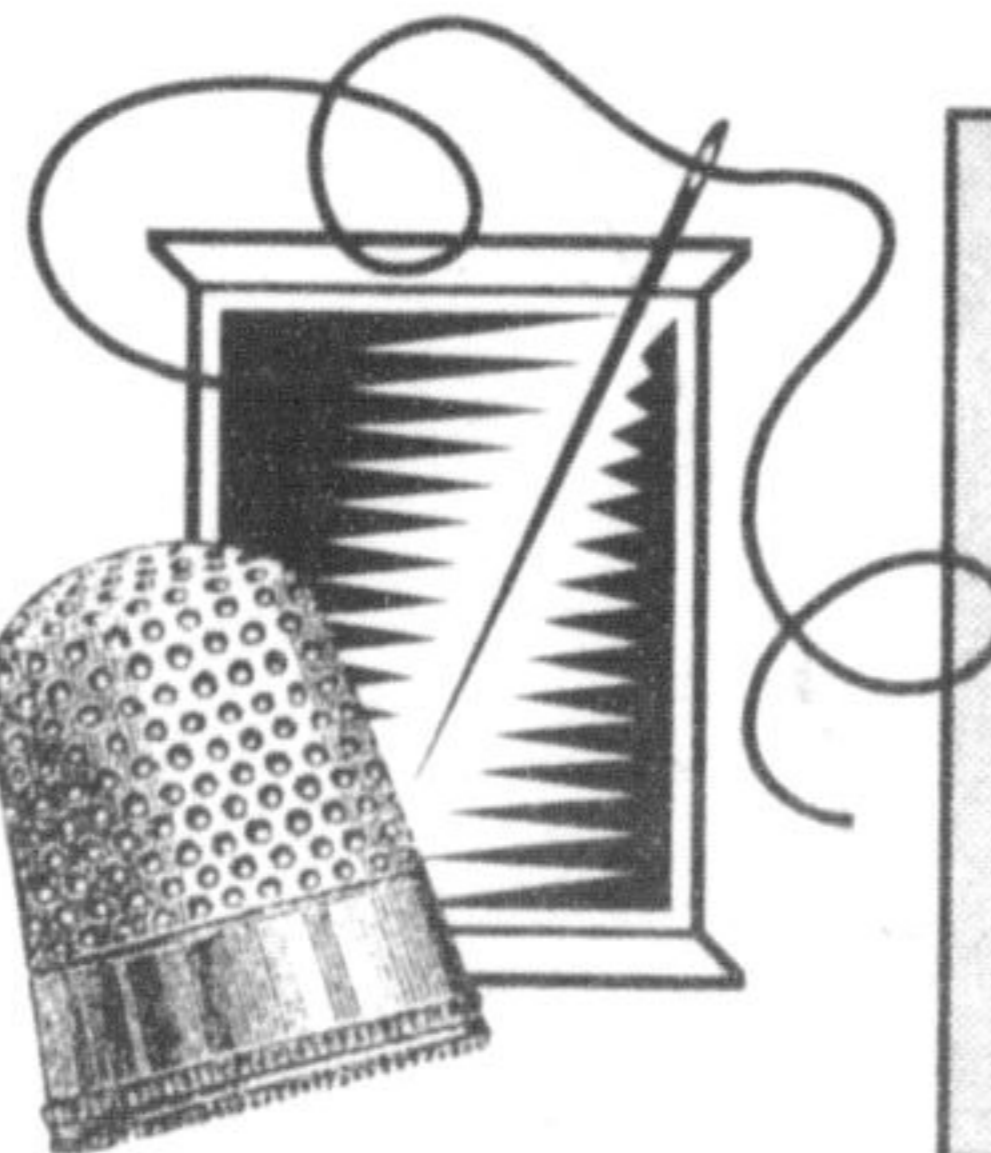
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