

Other centres currently up for sale

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Sound last month bounced and she still hasn't been compensated for it.

She said she did file a complaint with the Ministry of Labour but didn't follow it up because she felt it was a waste of time.

The Champion visited Mr. Doddington's home recently to get his response to former employees' claims of bounced cheques and improper compensation.

Ms Lister was there and said they didn't want to comment.

"Rumours are rumours," she said. "I believe this is a privacy issue."

After that, The Champion left messages for Mr. Doddington and Ms Lister on Friday and also delivered a letter to Mr. Doddington's home seeking comment again on the bounced cheque, the newsletters they put out and the Ministry of Labour investigation. At press time yesterday, they hadn't responded.

Miltonian Linda Smigelsky is a parent who said her son attended Safe and Sound in the Pentecostal church. She said parents were only given 11 days notice before the centre closed, leaving little time for them to find alternative daycare if they didn't want to transfer to another Safe and Sound location, which were still open at the time.

She said she's not seeking a refund from Safe and Sound because once she found out the centre was closing, she issued a stop payment on the last cheque she had given them.

Other parents who say their children also

attended Safe and Sound on Thompson Road contacted The Champion to discuss their experience with the daycare. However, none were willing to give their full names for publication.

Over at the other two Safe and Sound locations, parents and staff received a letter August 18 from Mr. Doddington and Ms Lister indicating they were forced to close the centres because their bank accounts have been frozen.

The letter states: "Mr. Doddington has not been able, although there are numerous offers on the table, to effect a sale of the business due to a court order in place, accounts have been frozen resulting in staff not being able to receive pay cheques and threatening the quality of care that we can provide to our children, which is of the utmost importance."

It goes on to say, "Thanks to all of our very dedicated staff, we have been able to keep our doors open until 6 p.m. on Friday, even though they are all aware that it will be some time before things may be ironed out within Safe and Sound and the matrimonial issues to allow them to receive those monies due and owing to them."

The letter also states that a "new proprietor" working to open a daycare at Safe and Sound's old location in the church has "provided us with a proposal wherein if all comes together and approval is granted by the ministry and Region, they would be prepared to offer all of our parents and children priority for care and not require

any of our parents to advance any further monies for childcare for the balance of August.

"Further, they have spoken to each of our employees and have advised that they would be most pleased to employ anyone of our current staff at their location."

The new daycare, Little Hands Children's Centre, is operated by Kym Selg, who reported that about 25 children who used Safe and Sound are now being looked after at her facility and about 10 former employees have joined her staff.

She said while Little Hands did offer to take in kids from Safe and Sound for free last week, it isn't affiliated with the former daycare.

"Teresa Lister is not with our company," she said.

Safe and Sound has a long and complicated history. It was initially operated by Edwina Doddington, but the business was put in her husband Peter's name. When the couple separated, he kept the daycare centres and took over operating them with several other business people, said Ms Doddington.

Now, the No. 3 Sideroad and Pine Street locations are up for sale. A listing for the business on a real estate Web site said the two daycares are to be sold as a package valued at \$1 million.

The recent letter from Mr. Doddington and Ms Lister ended with, "We deeply apologize for where we are today and assure each of you this was never where we expected to end up."

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Public invited to find out more about growth management plan

Local residents can learn more about a recently-released provincial growth management strategy at a public forum September 9.

The session will be held at the Halton Regional Centre and will look at the paper from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Renewal called Places to Grow: A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The document addresses the Province's vision for how and where municipalities will grow, along with infrastructure and environmental impacts of this growth.

"Public consultation has always been an important part of Halton's planning process," said Regional Chair Joyce Savoline.

"Halton is hosting the forum to receive input from the public which will assist us in developing our response to the ministry, who have given a deadline of September 24 for comments."

Presentation at 7 p.m.

The forum will start at 6 p.m. with a drop-in open house, followed by a presentation at 7 p.m.

At this time, the Province hasn't confirmed its attendance at the meeting.

Regional council will consider staff's report on Halton's response to the ministry at the September 15 planning and public works committee meeting and at regional council September 22.

The public can view the plan, learn more about Halton's forum and submit comments through the Region's Web site at www.region.halton.on.ca.

THE LEAVES AREN'T THE ONLY THINGS CHANGING THIS FALL.

WE'RE MAKING SOME CHANGES TO GO BUS SERVICE STARTING SEPTEMBER 4, 2004.

On our Milton Hwy. 401 route, two new eastbound weekday morning trips will serve stops in Milton and Mississauga, then run express to the York Mills subway station. Two new westbound weekday afternoon trips will depart from the York Mills subway station and serve the same locations. There are a few changes to some trips on this route so be sure to check the new schedule.

On the route that serves Milton, Mississauga and the Union Station GO Bus Terminal, we're adding some new trips and making a few changes to some existing trips too.

For more information on these and other changes, visit gotransit.com or just give us a call.

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