

✓ Hockey celebrities to appear at hardware store to raise money for tsunami disaster

Father Mark Curtis enlisted the help of two hockey celebrities to bring Miltonians a Christmas television special last month, and will be bringing them back to town this Friday evening.

This time around former

Toronto Maple Leafs great Johnny Bower and Canada's most famous hockey dad, Walter Gretzky will be asking for local residents' support for victims of the south Asia tsunami disaster.

The pair will visit Steeles

Avenue's Home Hardware from 6 to 8 p.m., with signed photographs of Mr. Bower and Mr. Gretzky available for \$5 apiece.

Father Curtis will also sell autographed copies of his new CD for the same price.

Local donations pour in to aid Asian victims

By **MELANIE HENNESSEY** and **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

The Champion

Donations are steadily flowing in to the local Red Cross office — and soon, hopefully, the police station — to help those left devastated by the massive earthquake and

tidal wave that tore through southern Asia last week.

Allison Goertzen, community services co-ordinator for the North Halton branch of the Red Cross, reported that local residents have donated \$25,074 to date, and the contributions keep coming.

"It's quite amazing. It's just been a steady stream of people," she said, adding, "From the little boy who brought in his \$5 Christmas money to the generous donation of \$3,000 from an individual, the people of Canada are opening their hearts to those who have lost everything."

Judith Dobbs, transportation co-ordinator with the local office, said money started coming in for the relief effort Wednesday and within a day-and-a-half, \$10,000 had been collected.

"We're doing pretty good. There's been a lot of phone calls and people coming by," she said. "It's been constant."

She noted the \$3,000 individual donation gave the fund a big boost.

So far, no businesses have brought in donations, Ms Dobbs reported, but corporate fundraising efforts are in the works.

"It's all been individual donations from Georgetown, Milton and Acton," she said.

While Ms Dobbs said those who donate can specify where they want their money to be used, everyone stopping by the local office is giving to the Asian relief effort.

To save money on shipping costs, Ms Dobbs said they're only accepting cash donations.

"The money gets sent over and they (Red Cross aid workers) can buy what they need," she said, such as tents and food.

The local Red Cross is also issuing a challenge to Milton schools to raise money for the relief efforts and is inviting the public to call the office with fund raising ideas — with the exception of door-to-door campaigns, which the Red Cross doesn't do.

Donations can be made in person at the local Red Cross office — it's open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday — or can be mailed to the office, located at 100 Nipissing Rd., Unit 5, L9T 5B2. For more information, call (905) 875-1459.

In efforts to do its part, the Halton Regional Police Service is also accepting donations at all of its stations — including the Milton station at 490 Childs Dr. — which will be directed to Halton branches of the Red Cross.

Tax receipts will be issued by the Red Cross and mailed to the donors. Donations can be made using cash, debit or credit cards.

Members of Halton Regional Police will be seen sporting red crosses in the days to come. This internationally-recognized symbol will be worn by police members who have donated to the relief fund, reported a press release issued by the police service.

"The wearing of the red cross demonstrates our solidarity with emergency aid workers in their valiant struggle to respond to the needs of the victims and their communities," said Halton Police Chief Ean Algar. "Their effort to preserve life and restore services must not go unnoticed and should not be forgotten."

He said local community members should also be remembered at this time.

"We also recognize that the impact of this tragedy is not only international, but also on members of our local community who have lost family and friends in the disaster region. Our thoughts are with them."

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

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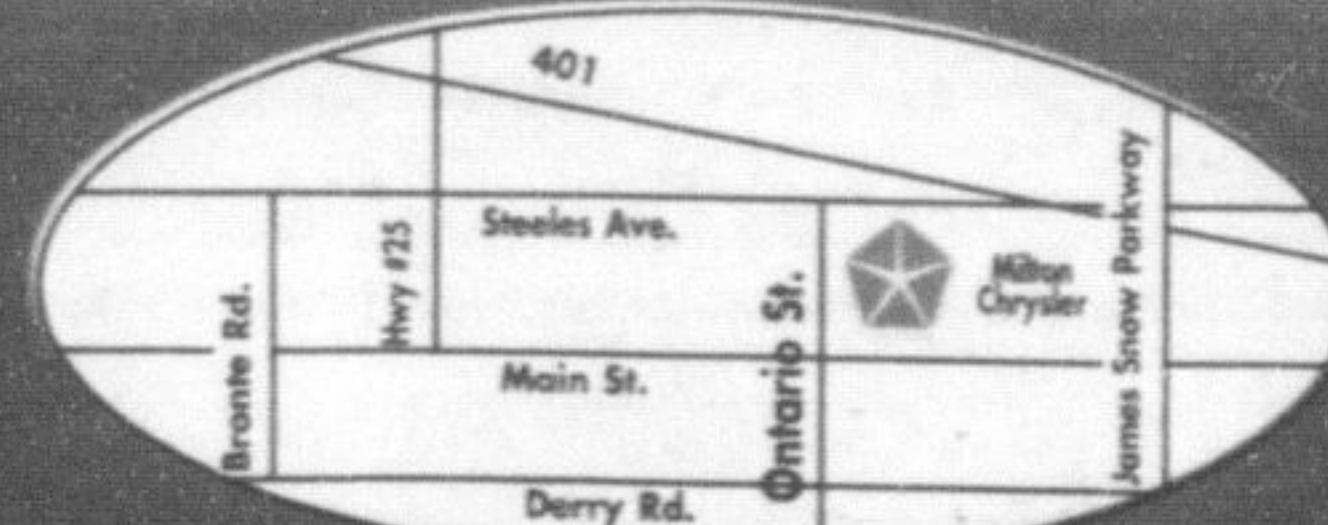
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