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A METROLAND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER VOL. 145 NO. 97 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2005 \$1.00 (GST included) 40 PAGES "Using Communication to Build Better Communities"

Jerome Heidemann, 7, looks for a school bus, but to no avail, as service isn't provided in his area. However, his mom Ira, in back with daughter Sofia, has launched a drive to change that.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



Woman heads drive to have school bus service extended to her neighbourhood

By MELANIE HENNESSEY
The Champion

A Milton woman is petitioning the Halton District School Board (HDSB) to have school bus service extended into her east-end neighbourhood.

Ira Heidemann, who lives in the south end of Alexander Crescent near the corner of Main Street East and Fourth Line, recently launched the petition out of concern for the approximate 1.5-km hike children in her neighbourhood make every day and their safety.

She said the shorter route that she can take when walking her seven-year-old son and the neigh-

bour's children to Chris Hadfield Public School is often snow-covered, inaccessible for her young daughter's stroller and some parts don't even have a sidewalk, leaving them either walking on the road or taking a longer route.

"Walking on the street is dangerous, especially in slippery weather circumstances, therefore the longer route is the only option in the winter," she said. "It's really very far. We have a right to get a school bus service."

Ms Heidemann measured the two routes using a measuring wheel and concluded the short path is 1,500 metres, or 1.5 km, and the long route is 1,647 metres, or 1.6 km.

But, HDSB Manager of Transportation Karen

Lacroix said the board only provides bus service for students in junior kindergarten to grade 5 when they live more than 1.6 km away from their school. For those in grades 6 to 8, they must live more than 3.2 km away.

"Since they do not meet the distance criteria, they're not eligible for transportation," she said.

Ms Heidemann estimated that in the immediate vicinity of her house, there's at least 20 children affected by the lack of bus service.

"If you go a bit further north on Alexander Crescent and its side streets, this number can easily double," she said. "Next school year there will be more children, as there are many young families

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