

Be cautious of students canvassing for schools

Make sure cause is legitimate, warns local school principal

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

The Champion

Police are advising the public to be cautious when giving money to students soliciting door to door.

On March 2 or 3, police were contacted by a local public school principal who said she'd received calls from two citizens — one in the Highside Drive area — who said a boy was canvassing door to door on behalf of W.I. Dick Public School and Sam Sherratt Public School.

The principal informed the two callers the school wasn't fundraising at the time, said Det. Sgt. Don Cousens of Halton Regional Police.

Officers are investigating the incidents, he said, adding at this point police don't have a description, nor do they know how much — if any — money was given to the student.

Steve Fraser, principal of Sam Sherratt Public School, said residents should be very cautious about giving money to kids collecting on behalf of schools. Most schools — including his — instruct their students not to collect door to door, but to stick to friends and family, he said.

"If any community member is concerned (about kids soliciting), they're advised to call the school," he said, adding money should never be given to students without asking exactly what it's going toward. "Get some information."

Tracy Adams, secretary at Sam Sherratt, said she received a call recently from an elderly woman who had given \$20 to a youth who said he was collecting money for playground equipment at Sam Sherratt.

Ms Adams said the woman called again two days later reporting the same youth had returned, this time soliciting on behalf of W.I. Dick. She said the woman was suspicious the second time around, and even more so when he returned for a third time.

"The third time she wouldn't open the door," Ms Adams said, adding it's horrible some kids can't be trusted. "It makes me sick."

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

Halton Region may take part in health study

The Region could soon be taking part in a study to examine the impacts social housing has on its tenants' health.

A staff report presented to regional council March 2 provided details of the proposed study, which would be a joint project between Halton, Peel Region, the City of Hamilton and a research team.

"The proposed project seeks to study the situation of new social housing residents to determine the impact that the receipt of social housing has on their general and mental health, as well as health behaviours (ex. diet, exercise and smoking) and on the mental health and behaviour of school-aged children," the report said.

Through the study, the health of those that use social housing would be compared to the health of people on the housing waiting list. Once individuals on the waiting list receive social housing, their health would be examined and compared again at intervals of six months, one year and two years using in-person and questionnaire-based research methods, the report said.

"We anticipate the findings of the research will offer considerable insight into the health and housing conditions of social housing residents prior to their re-housing and the prevalence of mental health problems in this population," the staff report said.

The group is going to submit a request for federal research funding. Before the project can go ahead, it has to be approved by Health Canada.

Nominations sought by CH

It's that time of the year again. Conservation Halton (CH) wants to know about any good deeds or actions that enhanced the natural environment last year.

The agency is accepting nominations for its 2004 Conservation Awards of Excellence until March 31.

Since 1982, CH has recognized people and organizations who've made significant contributions to conservation in the Halton watershed. Nominees have included teacher associations and federations, scout and guide organizations, naturalist clubs, corporations, government agencies and private landowners.

There are six categories in the program — citizen, community, education, stewardship, corporate and the conservation honour roll award for long-time dedication to environmental protection.

The winners' names are placed on a plaque and displayed in the lobby of CH's office, while individual plaques are presented to recipients.

Last year more than 20 people and groups were recognized from all areas of the watershed.

Conservation actions have included activities such as tree planting, stream rehabilitation and clean-up, school yard naturalization projects, environmental education activities, wildlife improvement projects and fundraising for conservation.

For more information about the categories, the criteria and how to apply, call CH at (905) 336-1158 or visit its Web site at www.conservationhalton.on.ca.

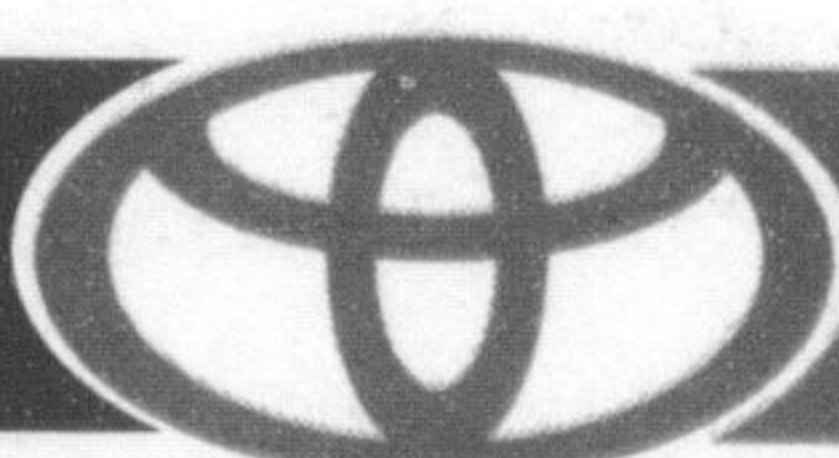
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