

Crossing guard Lillian Gauthier leads a group of youngsters across a busy Childs Drive crossing.  
Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

# Miltonians urged to be cautious in school zones

*Some parents creating safety issues when dropping off their kids, says crossing guard co-ordinator*

By MELANIE HENNESSEY  
The Champion

With the school year now well underway, the Town is calling on local residents to exercise caution when around crossing guards and the children they're helping arrive at school safely.

While they may seem like simple rules of the road, Town Crossing Guard Co-ordinator Valerie Lister is reminding residents of the basics like stopping when a crossing guard raises their stop sign and remaining stopped until all children are off the road and the guard has returned to their post and lowered their sign.

"Please observe these simple rules — the safety of our children depends on it," Ms Lister asked of local drivers.

In addition, she told The Champion a few parents who drive their children to and from school are creating safety issues on the road, such as by doing U-turns in front of schools. She said moves like these create "serious hazards" to the children in the area.

"If you do drive your children please obey all the signs around the school," she emphasized.

"Slow down and watch for the 40-km/h speed limits. If we all practise safe habits around the schools there will be fewer unnecessary accidents where children are hurt by cars."

She added residents should never pass a school bus when its lights are flashing and should always obey crossing guards.

One individual who's out there on the front line of duty and has seen first-hand what drivers will try to do is Lillian Gauthier.

A crossing guard in Milton for almost 20 years, she said there was one time when she had cars stopped, yet another driver came up behind those vehicles and tried to pass them. "I thought, what do they think the other cars are stopped for?" she said.

It's for reasons like these Ms Gauthier has developed her own technique for helping kids cross the road safely.

"I always tell the kids to watch for me and I never jump out — I always give the cars a good distance to stop," she said.

But she said on the whole, most drivers always stop for her.

**"If you do drive your children, please obey all the signs around the school."**

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"You get a lot of friendly ones who wave to you," she noted.

Ms Gauthier said she thinks a lot of the people on the road are parents driving their children to school — something Ms Lister said she'd like to see change.

"Everyone should consider letting their children walk to school. This would save gas, ease pollution and make it safer for everyone around the school," she said.

And for those kids who do already walk, there are rules of the road they should be following as well. In addition to obeying crossing guards, Ms Lister said youths should be getting off their bikes and scooters and walking them across the road.

Ms Lister said she's always looking for more crossing guards — a position that Ms Gauthier highly recommends to everyone.

"This job gives me a reason to get up in the morning," she said. "I just love the children. You watch them grow."

Ms Gauthier spoke with pride about the children she's met over the years as if they're her own, like a boy she used to help cross the road who's now gone off to university and recently came back to visit her.

"The children, they remember you," she said proudly. "This job helps you get to know the people in your town."

She added she wishes more people would consider becoming crossing guards. "I would encourage anybody to try it," she said.

Ms Lister said applicants have to be at least 18 years old, physically fit, able to deal with inclement weather like rain, snow or extreme heat, have good vision and hearing and be able to move quickly.

The position pays \$11.93 an hour to start. Work hours would be a half hour before and after each school day, with start and finish times varying by location.

Those interested can drop a resume off to Ms Lister at the Clerk's department at Town Hall, 43 Brown St., or apply on-line at [www.milton.ca](http://www.milton.ca).

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at [mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com).



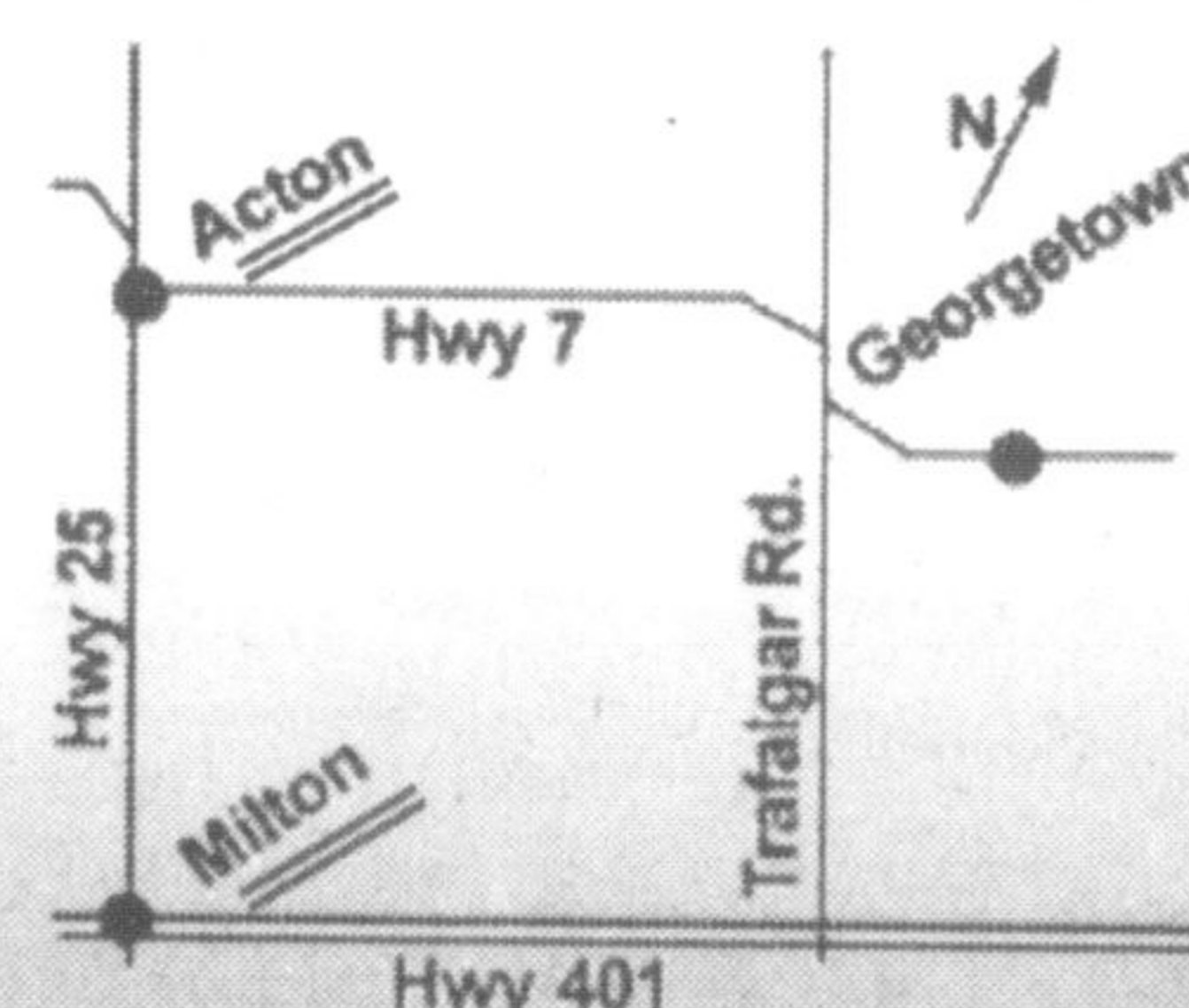
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