

Region continues its battle against TB

Tomorrow is World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, and to mark the occasion the Region is once again supporting the Stop TB Partnership.

The group includes over 500 stakeholders including the World Health Organization, governments, industry, health-care agencies and humanitarians who are working together to help reduce the incidence of TB and increase awareness that the disease is preventable, treatable and curable.

"Tuberculosis continues to be a global public health concern, with almost nine million new cases of TB occurring yearly and nearly two million deaths each year," said Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal.

"The incidence of TB in Ontario and Halton is much less but still significant and requires comprehensive tuberculosis control programming. There are over 600 TB cases each year in Ontario, of which between six to ten cases occur annually in Halton."

One key component of the Stop TB Partnership requires making Directly Observed Treatment Strategy (DOTS) the worldwide standard of care for TB. The strategy is practised in Halton and requires an individual who is trained in DOTS to watch the person receiving treatment take their medications.

Support growing

Individuals receiving treatment benefit from the support and encouragement to take their medication properly and completely. Since 1995, more than 22 million TB patients around the world have been treated under DOTS.

Tuberculosis can affect almost any part of the body, however, TB disease of the lung is the most worrisome as the bacteria can be exhaled into the air during singing, coughing, sneezing and breathing.

People nearby can then breathe the bacteria into their lungs where the bacteria can either begin to grow (TB disease) or become dormant (TB infection). Symptoms of TB disease may include a cough that lasts three weeks or longer, coughing up blood, shortness of breath, chest pain, loss of appetite, fatigue and weakness. Individuals with these symptoms should see their health-care provider.

Anyone who has had close, frequent contact with someone who has TB disease is at high risk of TB infection. Individuals also at greater risk for TB infection include: those who have a medical condition that reduces the body's ability to fight infections such as HIV/AIDS, those who live in close and crowded conditions, in institutions or are homeless, the elderly and those who come from countries with high rates of TB.

Medications to treat or prevent TB are provided free of charge at local public health departments.

For more information about TB and the Stop TB Partnership, contact Halton Region at (905) 825-6000 or visit www.halton.ca.

Conservation award nominations deadline Mar. 31

Conservation Halton (CH) wants to know about any good deeds that have enhanced the natural environment during 2006.

Until March 31, CH is accepting nominations for its conservation awards, which will be distributed May 23 at its administration centre in Burlington.

There are six categories — citizen, community, education, stewardship, corporate

and the conservation honour roll award for long time dedication to environmental protection. The winners' names will be placed on a plaque that's displayed in CH's head office.

Individual plaques will be presented to recipients.

The awards have been given out since 1982. Past nominees have included teacher associations and federations, scout and guide

groups, naturalist clubs, corporations, government agencies and private landowners.

Projects have included tree planting, stream rehabilitation and clean-up, school-yard naturalization, environmental education, wildlife improvement and fundraising for conservation.

For more information, visit www.conservationalton.on.ca or call (905) 336-1158.

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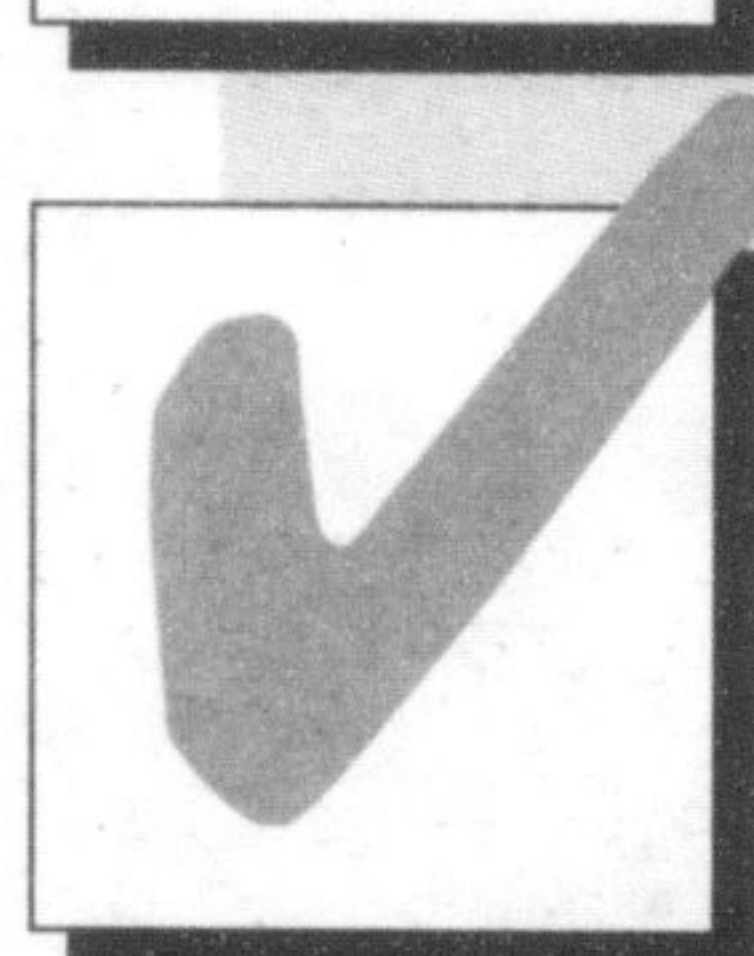


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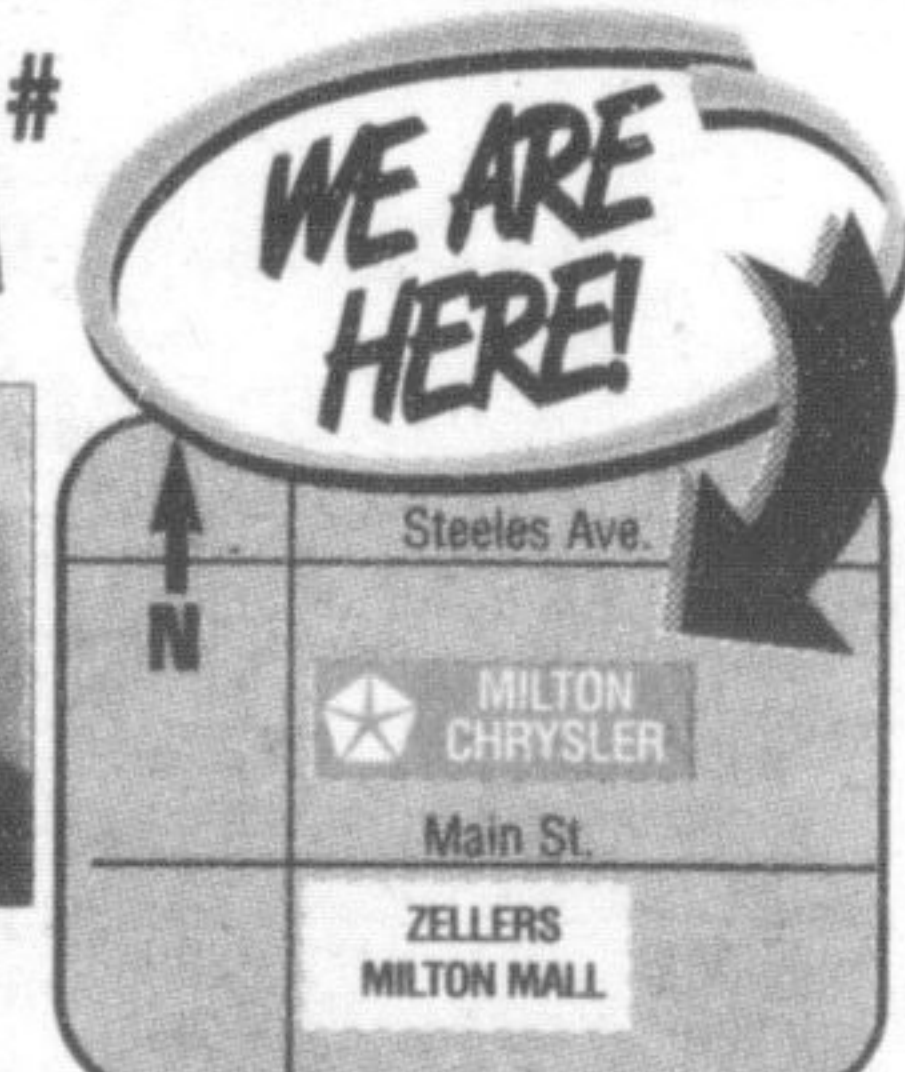
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