

Bus driver criticized for leaving sick girl with strangers

By **Melanie Hennessey**
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Laidlaw Transport is in damage control mode this week after one of its bus drivers left a sick Milton girl in the care of strangers.

The situation, which happened last Friday, has made six-year-old Charlotte Delisle's parents angry and worried about all the horrible 'what ifs' that could've happened if the woman their daughter was left with hadn't been a Good Samaritan who returned her home safely.

"The nice mom who walked her home could've been anyone," said Charlotte's mother, Cameo. "It's easy to see if any of those what ifs had come true, a lot more action would be taken right now."

It all started when Charlotte boarded the bus Friday morning with an upset

stomach, since she's been nervous about school. Cameo said Charlotte threw up in her hand on the bus and got off at a stop in front of Hawthorne Village School to clean herself off.

This caught the attention of a group of moms at the stop with their children, like Anne Harris.

"We said to her, 'Do you want to go home?' She told us her mom is home and gave us her address," she said. "We told the bus driver we'll take care of it. In hindsight, maybe we shouldn't have done that, but it was our motherly instincts."

Another woman in the group, who wishes to remain anonymous, then walked Charlotte home. Harris insisted the bus driver is a really nice man who didn't abandon Charlotte at the bus stop. Despite that, Laidlaw Education Services general manager Rich Bagdonas said the busing company is at fault.

"Once a child is in our care, we're responsible for delivering them to the designated drop-off," he said. "In this situation, our policies were not followed."

He said Laidlaw is now reinforcing its policy to all of its drivers to prevent similar incidents from happening again.

"We're obviously concerned for the safety and well-being of all students we transport," he said.

Bagdonas added Laidlaw would also like to get a message out to parents to let bus drivers know if there's something they should be looking out for, like a child who doesn't feel well.

While he said action will be taken - with one possible course of action being reassignment of the bus driver to a different route - he said Laidlaw is still evaluating what's appropriate.

He noted the driver has been with the company for a number of years and

doesn't have any other prior instances of bad judgment on record.

The Delisles are calling for a better system to be put in place to deal with situations like these.

Halton District School Board (HDSB) spokesperson Marnie Denton shared similar sentiments, suggesting that in the future bus drivers could use their two-way radios to contact the dispatcher and discuss what action should be taken.

"Our board contracts with Laidlaw and we have expectations as the recipient of a service," she said. "Safety is the priority when it comes to school bus transportation."

About 15,000 HDSB students are bused to school daily in Halton.

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



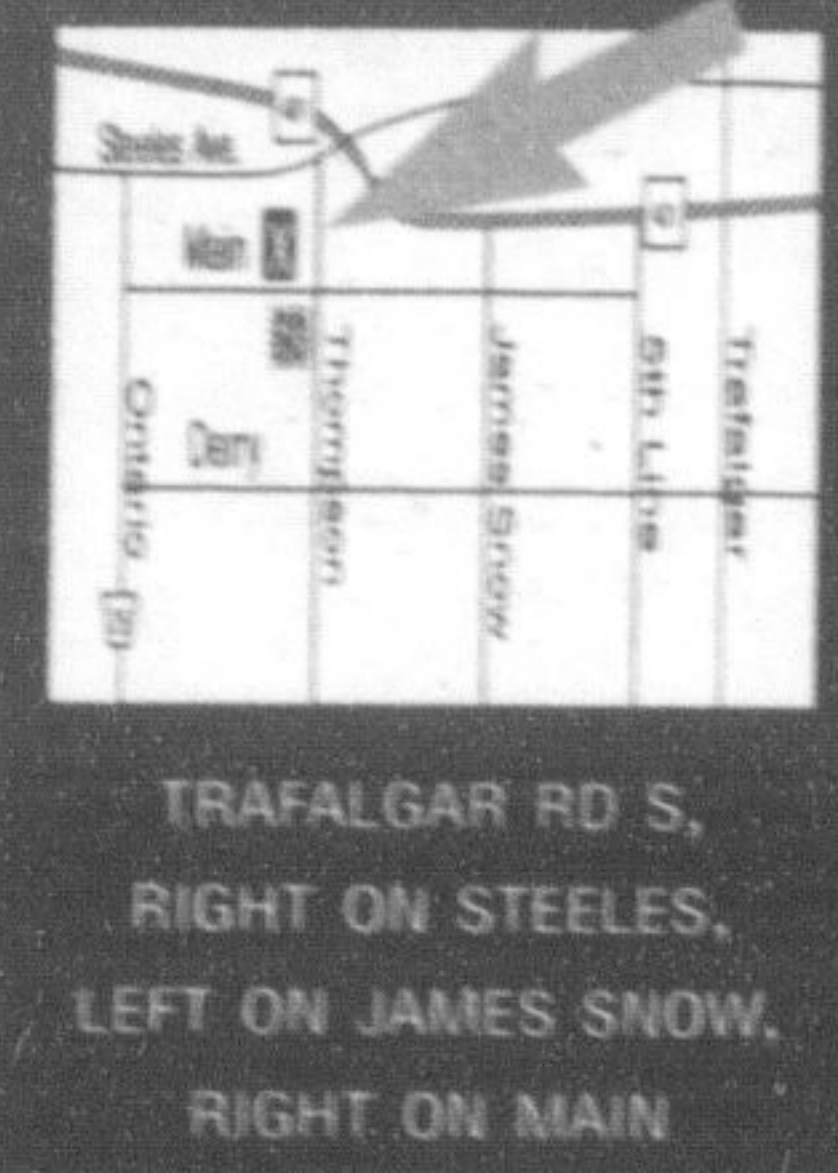
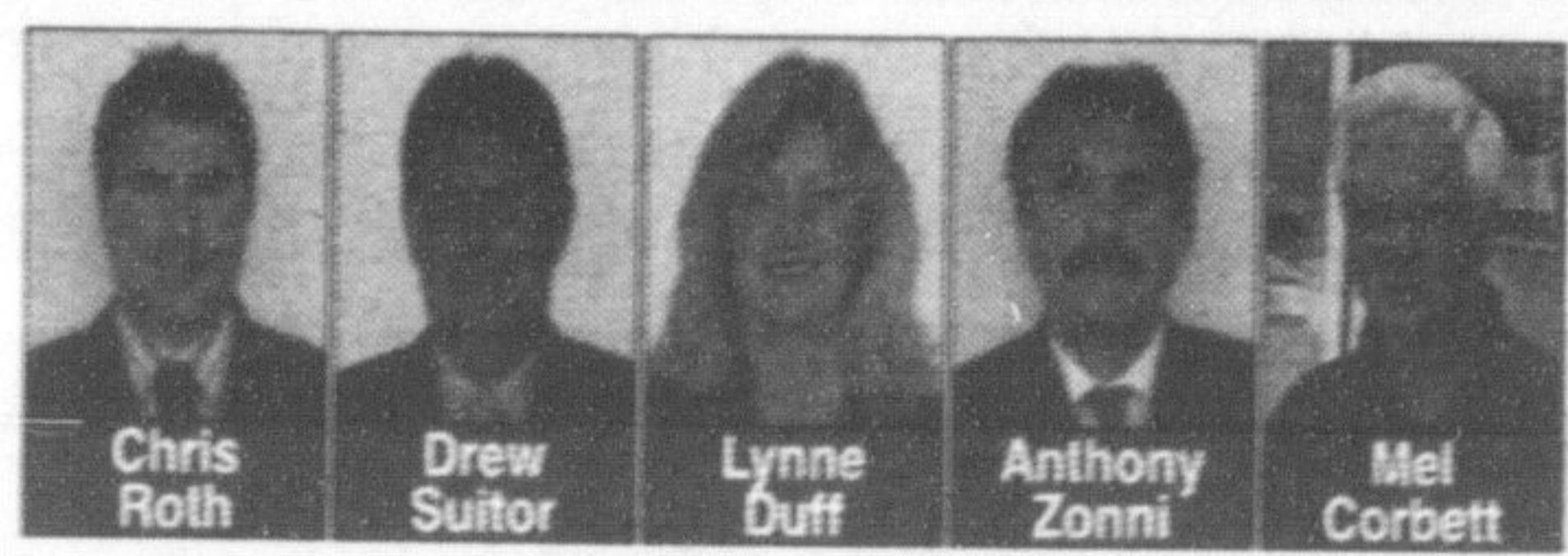
Wallace FALL SAVINGS

PONTIAC • BUICK • CADILLAC

2000 PONTIAC SUNFIRE Silver, 111,247 kms, full pwr package, non optimum, Stk# 171559A \$5,999	1990 SIERRA 2500 White, 110,655 kms, 5.7 l, auto, long box certified, Stk# 220155A \$5,295	2007 CADILLAC CTS Black, 3.6L, Lux. Pkg, 25,000kms \$33,999	2002 PONTIAC MONTANA EXT Gold, 92,068 kms, loaded, 1SC package, VCR, TV, non optimum, Stk# 149389A \$9,399	2005 MAZDA 3 JUST ARRIVED! Silver, Automatic, 37,000 Kms \$16,988	2003 CHEVROLET MALIBU LS DK Grey, 53,456 kms, loaded, leather, sunroom, alloys Stk# P3395A \$11,588	2003 BUICK RENDEZVOUS Gold, 63,662 kms, 1SA- 5 passenger, full power group, Stk# P3345A \$13,999	
2004 GMC SIERRA Z71 Pewter, 61,554 kms, SLE pkg., 4x4 full power group, two tone, Stk# P3396A \$25,699	2004 CADILLAC SRX A.W.D. Dk Blue, 55,200 kms, leather, 7-pass, V8, no sunroof, Stk# P3404A \$28,888	2004 INFINITI F35 Black, 67,774 kms, leather, roof loaded, Stk# P3427A \$33,899	2006 PONTIAC PURSUIT SE Purple, 17,026 kms, sunroof, alloys, full power group, x rental, Stk# P3367A \$14,495	2006 PONTIAC G5 PURSUIT Orange, 14,524 kms, loaded, sunroof, SE model, former rental Stk# P3352A \$14,995	2006 PONTIAC SV6 MONTANA Silver, 36,018 kms, 1SA- Pack, full power group, Stk# PL3352A \$15,999		
2006 MALIBU V6 LT 4 Dr, sedan, 26 kms, grey finish \$16,498	2006 PONTIAC GR PRIX G1 Stealth, 29,800 kms, loaded, leather, sunroof, x rental, Stk# P3366A \$21,997	2006 GMC SIERRA Z71 White, 19,897 kms, ext. cab 4x4 5.3, V8, two tone paint, Stk# P3376A \$28,959	2006 CADILLAC STS V6, Silver-Ebony interior, Roof Rack, Loaded! \$41,598	2005 PONTIAC SUNFIRE SL Great value! Only 46,000 kms 5-speed transmission, power door locks & more \$9,495	2003 CHEV CAVALIER VLX 84,000kms, Stk# P3284A \$8,495	1999 GMC SIERRA White, 6.5 diesel ext'd cab, "as is" \$13,999	2003 BUICK REGAL Spoil yourself rotten! Red, loaded w/ leather, p/sunroof \$13,999
2002 AUDI A4 3.0 Leather sunroof, loaded, 4 wd \$17,399	2006 BUICK RENDEZVOUS GN PLUS 3 to choose from, fully equipped, alloys, full pwr pkg, bal of warranty, former rental, Stk#P3373A \$21,688	2005 GMC JIMMY 2-DOOR 4X4 28,000kms, black, full pwr package, alloy wheels, Stk#3387A \$16,988	2002 VW PASSATT Black, 1.8L, roof, Stk. #198304A \$11,988	2006 CADILLAC ESCALADE ESV Diamond White/Cashmere Int., Nav. System, Roof Rack. Only 74,000kms \$46,998	2004 GMC SIERRA 2500 Crew Cab 44 Diesel Trade-In. Stk. #542787A \$32,888	2005 SV6 MONTANA 46,000 kms, fully equipped incl. quad captain seating, all pwr options & bal. of fact war \$15,999	2007 CHEV MALIBU JUST ARRIVED! Silver, V6, LTD. Edition, Only 19,000kms \$17,888

GM
Optimum USED VEHICLES
Canada

- Manufacturer's Warranty
- 150+ Point Inspection
- 30 Day/2500 kms. No Hassle Exchange Policy
- 24 Hour Roadside Assistance



Wallace
PONTIAC • BUICK • CADILLAC

(905) 878-2355
TOLL FREE 1-888-878-2354
WWW.WALLACEPONTIAC.COM

801 MAIN ST. E. MILTON
MON-THURS 9-8
FRI-SAT 9-6