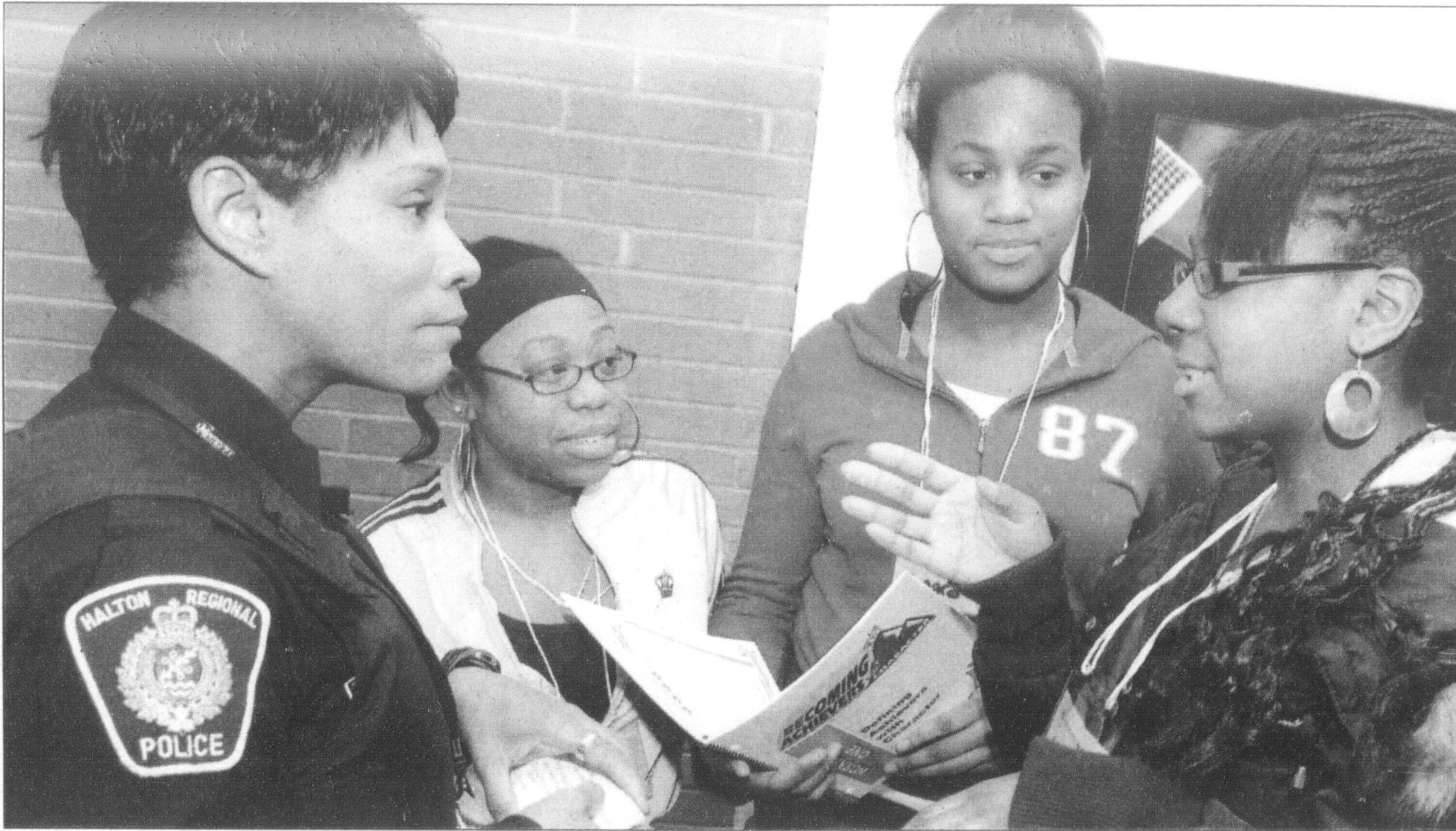


Youths guided on path to become future leaders



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

FUTURE LEADERS: Halton Regional Police recruiting officer Denise Jodhan talks to (from left) Mariah Vincent, Amara Anomneze and Mikah Small about a career in policing. It was part of the 'Black Youth in Action Project' at the Milton police station Saturday.

*Canadian Caribbean Association
hosts event in partnership with police*

By Melanie Cummings
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Teenagers Mariah Vincent, Mikah Small and Amara Anomneze intend to start something soon — at school, after high school and far into their future.

They are leaders.

So are Martin Pitt, Ishmael Mohammed and 17 other students aged 13 to 18.

If this crew didn't know they had it in them before, they do now after participating Saturday in a daylong program aimed at shining a light on the potential of black students.

Called the 'Black Youth in Action Project,' the local event, which took place at the Milton police station, was the second phase of a community leadership and anti-racism initiative organized in partnership with the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAH) and the Halton Regional Police Service. The first session was conducted last year in Oakville.

Focused on infusing self-esteem and learning time management these students got an insight into bullying, gang violence and deciphering graffiti as well as the ins and outs of a police officer's workday and the credentials that got them there.

"Our goal is to instill in them pride for their communities at school, in their neighbourhoods and city, to be good citizens and people who can be counted on to do the right thing," said CCAH president Veronica Tyrell.

Amara is a Grade 9 student at Bishop Reding Secondary. While she relished a presentation that focused solely on her race, especially in light of Black History Month, she's using the time spent Saturday toward the 100 hours she needs to accumulate for a McDonald's Restaurants post-secondary scholarship.

For Mikah, 16, a student at Port Credit Secondary School in Mississauga, the presentations by several police officers and tour through their workplace was an up-close look at a potential career in policing.

For now though, Mikah wants to use the leadership skills she has learned to start a charitable fundraising effort at her school, and then perhaps a heritage club.

• see **EVENT** on page B14

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