

Donation to fund new musical instruments for Halton schools

By Tim Whitnell
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

A donation by a bank is music to the ears of students and teachers in Halton.

Scotiabank and the Halton Learning Foundation, the fundraising arm of the Halton District School Board, recently announced that the Scotiabank Arts Revitalization Program will provide \$20,000 to support the purchase of musical instruments in 10 Halton public schools this year.

"In many of these schools the instruments haven't been replaced for a number of years. We left it up to their (Halton Learning Foundation) discretion where the money would go," said Ahmad Dajani, Scotiabank district vice-president, GTA West.

Among the schools are Milton's Sam Sherratt and W.I. Dick.

All will receive an almost equal share of the funding.

"This is the first year they have come on board," Pat

Wright, executive director of the Halton Learning Foundation (HLF), said of Scotiabank.

Wright said the 10 schools are already starting to use the money.

The arts revitalization program is a blend of the HLF's Barriers to Learning Focus and the Enrichment Program focus.

"The demographic profile at several schools suggests that many students have few opportunities to participate in the arts and music programs. Research indicates that while economic factors can present significant learning barriers to children, interventions by the community can have a real and long-term impact on the students they touch," stated a press release trumpeting the musical instruments donation.

The HLF is an alliance of community leaders and school board staff committed to raising funds and seeking resources to enrich the learning opportunities and eliminate barriers to learning for Halton students.

The 2006-07 school year saw

a significant increase in funds raised and support provided to the Halton District School Board by the HLF.

A total of \$276,100 in grants was dispersed by the foundation to schools and students in 2006-07 in three categories — enrichment, eliminating barriers and scholarships.

The enrichment fund provided \$82,000 for things like purchasing musical instruments in five high schools and 15 elementary schools (\$20,000) and to buy physical education equipment for four secondary schools and three elementary schools plus one set of aerobic steps for board-wide use (\$12,000).

Dajani said the financial institution hasn't committed to making a similar donation to the Halton board for next year but likes its partnership with the HLF and will re-evaluate what it might do with the board in the future.

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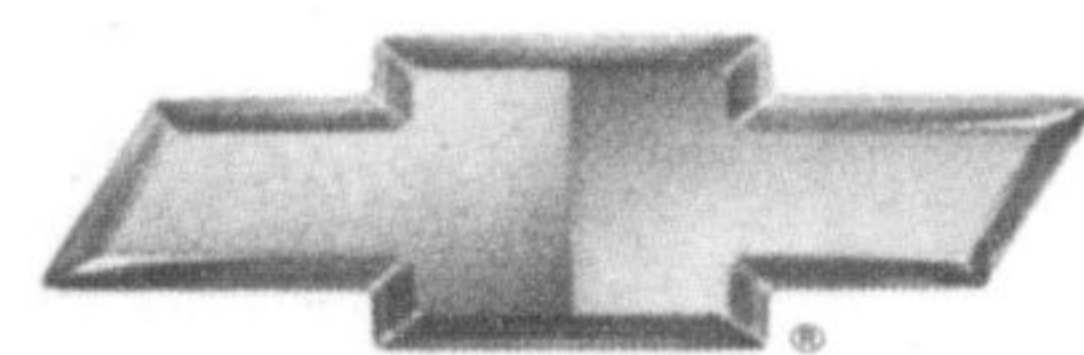
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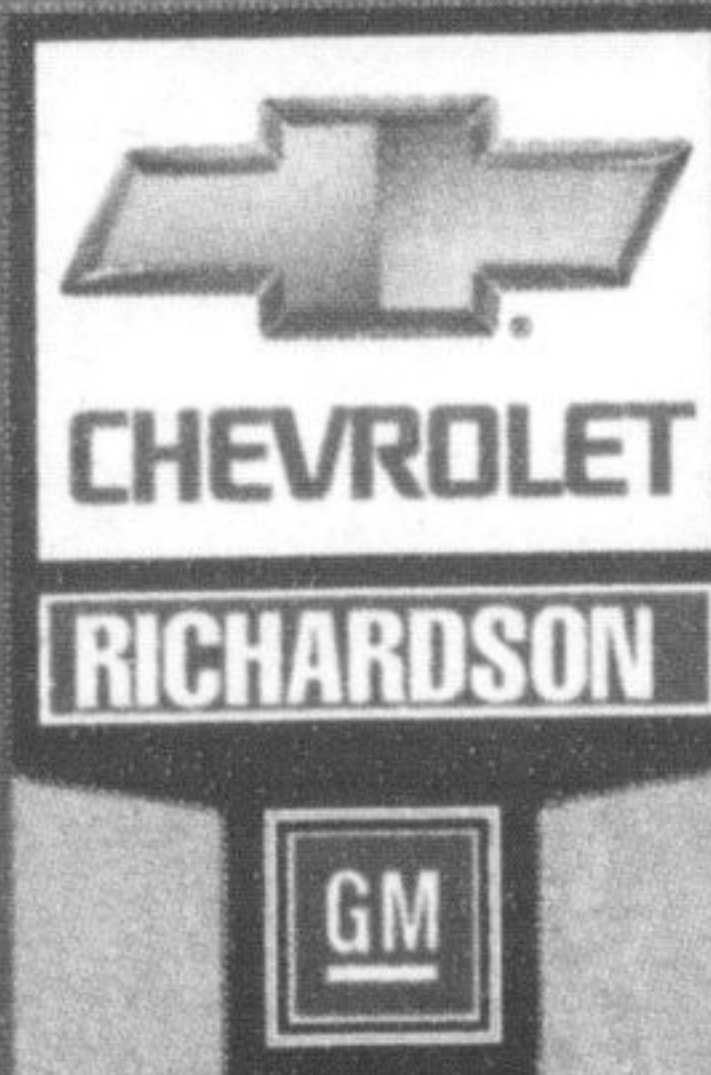
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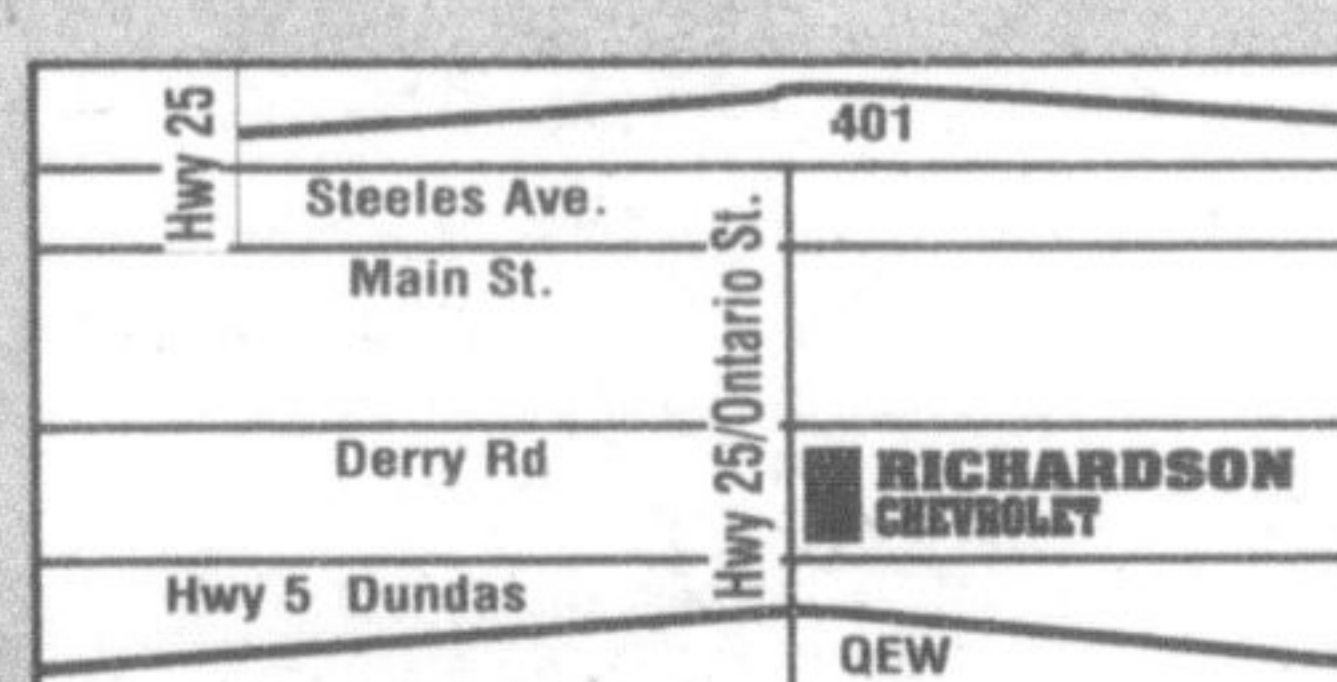
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