

Homeless man helped himself

This is the second in a series of articles focussing on the need for emergency shelter and affordable housing in north Halton. The cases presented are true but the names have been changed.

The articles have been prepared by the North Halton Housing Committee of the Halton Social Planning Council. The Halton Social Planning Council is a non-profit organization involved in research, planning and community development activities in north Halton. For more information call Elaine Eastman at 632-1975 or 877-3219.

The housing needs of individuals and families in our community can vary from a need for long-term affordable housing right through to a need for one or two nights accommodation.

Dave was an example of the later. At age 22, Dave needed help. He had no job or money and was sleeping in his old car. He hadn't eaten for two days. Prior to this he had lived in an apartment with friends but trouble developed and he was literally

thrown out. He needed food, shelter and someone to help him connect with the various sources of government help that were available. Dave called the Red Cross.

A volunteer from the local Red Cross met him at a restaurant in town. Dave seemed a personable young man who was eager to help himself out of his situation. He had supported himself off and on since he was 17. His family lived in a nearby town but because of recent conflicts in the home, he was definite that he wanted no part of them. He had registered with the Canada Employment Centre who had told him of a job in a nearby town but he had no gas to go and apply for it.

After assessing his situation, the Red Cross volunteer explained that she could help him by providing food and shelter for a few nights and enough money to help out with the purchase of some gas. In addition, she pointed out that Dave might be able to receive some emergency assistance from the Region of Halton's Social Service Department.

And, if he wasn't able to secure a job, this same department could help apply for General Welfare Assistance.

While the Red Cross volunteer arranged for a motel room, Dave called Social Services and informed a social worker there of his situation. They agreed to set up a time when they could complete an application for him.

With gas in his car, a good night's rest and some food in him, Dave set off the next day for a job interview in Georgetown. When the Red Cross volunteer followed up with him later in the day to see how he had made out, Dave was elated and indeed hopeful. He had got the job and was to start the next morning.

Later that week, he met with the social worker from the Region who agreed to send him a cheque that would help tide him over until he received his first pay cheque.

This is one situation where local agencies, in this case the Red Cross and the Region of Halton, were able to help a young man help himself.



Photo by LISA TALLYN

Elizabeth Kiddle recently returned from a visit to India where she served as a volunteer distributing bed kits to more than 5,000 children courtesy of the charity Sleeping Children Around the World. She is pictured holding the duffel bag each child is presented with which would contain a groundsheet, mattress, sheets, pyjamas, blanket and clothing.

Indian children sleeping easier thanks to visit

By LISA TALLYN

Due largely to people such as Milton's Elizabeth Kiddle, more than 5,000 children in India now have a comfortable place to sleep at night.

Mrs. Kiddle travelled to India in March as part of the charity Sleeping Children Around the World (SCAW). The organization is headed by Islington resident Murray Dryden, father of NHL players Ken and David Dryden.

Mr. Dryden and his wife Margaret founded the charity in 1970 after he visited Pakistan and was shocked by the sight of children sleeping on the roadsides. He decided he wanted to help, and thought that providing the children with a place to sleep is an area no other charity is focused on.

A \$28 contribution to SCAW buys a bed kit for a child in a Third World country. Since 1970 more than \$2.5 billion has been raised by Mr. Dryden, which has meant that 130,000 children in 24 countries including Kenya, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Jamaica, now have some form of bedding. Every penny raised by the charity goes directly to the children.

Mrs. Kiddle travelled to 10 centres in India with a handful of volunteers and Mr. Dryden to co-ordinate the distribution of the bed kits from money raised through SCAW before Christmas.

The kits included a groundsheet,

mattress, sheets, pyjamas, blanket or mosquito netting, sweater and other clothing, and personal care items, numbering up to 20.

Mrs. Kiddle first became involved with the charity five years ago. She missed an opportunity to hear Mr. Dryden speak locally but she contacted him in late January about the charity.

When he told her the next distribution trip was set for March, the Milton woman immediately volunteered her services.

"Travelling to India was a lifelong dream for me," said Mrs. Kiddle. "I had wanted to visit the country since I was six years old."

This distribution trip was in south India, and the Indian end of the operation was handled by local Rotary Clubs. The Rotary Club members decided which children would be worthy recipients for the bed kits.

At each distribution centre SCAW volunteers and Rotary Club members distributed the kits, along with donor cards, then had the children sit on their kits for a photograph.

The pictures are sent back to the donors for proof their money actually went to help a particular child.

Mrs. Kiddle was not shocked by the impoverished lifestyle of many of the Indian children. She had visited Third World countries before.

"The trip was very rewarding. The experience was overwhelming for some of the children, some were frightened because it may have been the only time any of them had their picture taken.

"But there was so much excitement, joy, curiosity and fun, that it seemed like Christmas every day while we were there."

She is not the only member of the Kiddle family to be involved in SCAW. Her two children Jennie, 15, and Amie, 10, are both donors.

Mrs. Kiddle says a rewarding aspect of her trip to India was when the group visited a very poor area in India and as she was handing out bed kits and donor cards she came across the names of her two children.

"It was so moving to be able to give two lovely girls in India a place to sleep from my own two girls."

Mrs. Kiddle has accepted the role of spokesperson for SCAW in the area. If asked, she will speak to local groups about the charity and her recent trip to India.

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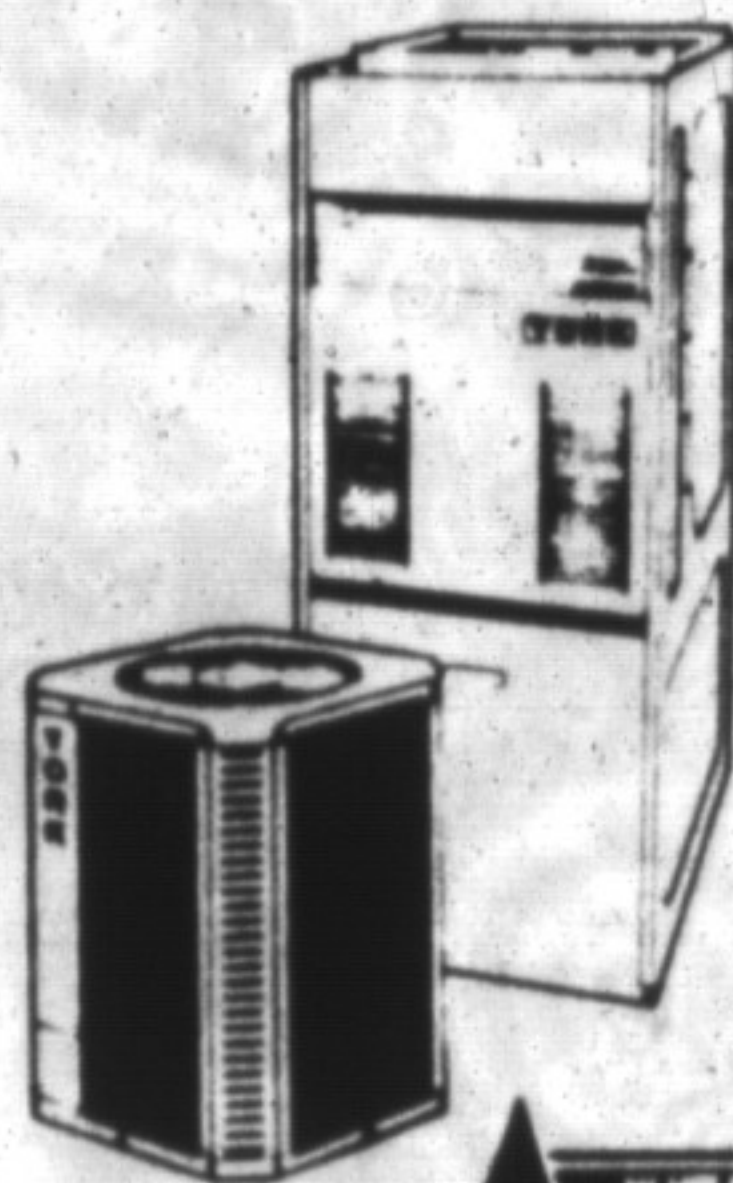
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