

Students selling chocolate bars for school trip

By KAREN SMITH

Staff and students at Trillium School in Milton are in the midst of a major fundraising campaign.

The Ontario Street school for youths with learning disabilities aims to raise enough money to take a four-day excursion. A trip once every two years is a tradition at the school, said Clive Hodder, program director.

A student, selling chocolate bars, will likely be knocking on your door sometime soon. Other fundraising ventures are being planned as well, said Tammie Jones, a counselor and organizer of the drive.

The destination of the trip hasn't been decided, said Ms Jones, but a few ideas are in mind. They include a cruise around Lake Ontario, an adventure initiative course at Canterbury Hills, or a trip to Kingston and Ottawa.

Trillium School provides educational programs for 32 students from across Ontario. The majority are male since, in the general population, the ratio of males to females with learning disabilities is 10 to one.

The age range is 11-17, the average age being 14. Students who come to the school are significantly under-achieving in some or all of the academic areas. Poor language and reading skills are common and many have immature social skills. But all students have normal or above average potential.

"They have good intelligence," said Mr. Hodder. "They're just not performing."

Established and run by the Ministry of Education, Trillium became a residential school to provide students with a holistic educational experience. The majority stay for five days a week and travel home on the weekend.

The facility is designed to serve as a resource to school boards, rather than to function as a separate education system, said Mr. Hodder. Its goal is to send students to regular high schools after two years. The ultimate aim is to enable students to become confident and independent learners.

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