

Free condoms are not the answer, says Scholtens

Burlington regional councillor Ralph Scholtens thinks he got short-changed, and so did his constituents, in Halton's battle against the spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Boxes lead to discovery at schools

Classes at two Halton public schools have been hard at work putting together Discovery Boxes to celebrate Canada's 125th birthday.

Martin Street School and Pineview School students are filling the boxes with interesting things about themselves and the community.

Some items included in the boxes will be class pictures, maps, home videos made by students, paintings, student letters and a copy of *The Champion*.

The boxes will be sent to partner schools in other parts of Canada via bus couriers.

Pineview's Discovery Box will be sent to a grade one class in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

Boxes from Martin Street will be going to Port Coquitlam, B.C. and Paincourt, Lindsay, and Verona, Ontario.

Pineview has already received a box from Scarborough. Martin Street students were expecting boxes from schools in other Canadian locations.

The program was designed for students across the country to learn about and share with other communities in Canada.

Mr. Scholtens voiced his irritation Monday at the regional health and social services committee meeting when an update on Halton's efforts to stem AIDS was presented.

The councillor took issue with the regional campaign in March and April which involved distributing free condoms in 10 washrooms at the Halton Regional Centre in Oakville.

"I'm not overly delighted to find condoms in the bathrooms of public places," Mr. Scholtens said. "If the

message from the Region is to pick up a load of free condoms, I don't think that's the message we should be sending."

Mr. Scholtens said he feels condoms are "a lousy way to battle AIDS" because they build a false sense of security in users when "they're not getting security at all," since there is always the risk of them breaking.

It was his understanding that there would be more emphasis on a "two-pronged" strategy to combat the dis-

ease, coupling education on monogamous relationships and abstinence with efforts to prevent the disease through condom distribution.

"I'm not sure (the) committee will share your views," countered Burlington councillor Doug Greenaway. Mr. Greenaway said it would be "advantageous" if Halton had more free condoms to distribute.

Peter Willmott, Halton's director of environmental health, stressed that in his view "there is a very strong educational component," to

Halton's AIDS prevention campaign. Halton has helped organize a workshop for various community groups on the disease and had public health nurses visit seven area bars as part of its awareness plan. The nurses handed out educational material and condoms at the bars.

Mr. Scholtens proposed no formal action regarding his concerns, but did say he hoped to see a more pronounced educational effort if a similar AIDS awareness exercise is mounted next year.

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