AIDS Day, by the Halton Regional Health Department's AIDS Program.

Each week the confidential AIDS information line will feature several messages related to HIV infection and AIDS and will encourage callers to contact the AIDS program staff for further information, counselling and referral.

The confidential line will be accessible at no charge to callers within Halton. Callers may also leave comments or questions which will be addressed during future messages.

Since 1988, each Dec. 1 has been observed worldwide as a day of action designed to raise public awareness of HIV/AIDS and to promote prevention and understanding.

World AIDS Day highlights up-to-

A new AIDS information line was tion among those not regularly conlaunched December 1 — World fronted with HIV/ AIDS, according to the health department. The day also spreads messages of compassion, hope and understanding.

This year's theme, "A Community Commitment", stresses how vital it is for every community to pledge itself to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Education is the key to action and its importance cannot be over estimated, states a health department press release. As fact and understanding drive out ignorance and superstition, people learn how to avoid becoming infected and also lose their fear of caring for those living with HIV and AIDS.

order to make a real difference, it is AIDS Program can help you with crucial that all members of our community make a commitment to increase their awareness around HIV date information on prevention and and AIDS. Many people feel it has

tics suggest that if AIDS has not yet touched your life in some way, it probably will in the future. The time to act is now."

HIV/AIDS is not the problem of any one group in our community. The press release listed the following examples of community commitment:

\* Ask yourself if there is information you do not have. Educate yourself by taking advantage of the AIDS Progress resources and knowledgeable staff.

\* Talk to your children about HIV infection and AIDS so they have the information they may need to keep themselves healthy and aware. Find Bruce Clarke, an educator with the out what they are learning in school Halton AIDS Program says that "in and become involved. Again, the suggestions and materials.

\* Be a role model to the community by confronting misinformation and prejudice, and the stigmatization of those living with HIV or AIDS.

\* Volunteer some time by helping with an AIDS related fundraiser or get involved with an AIDS awareness committee.

\* Ask your politicians about their opinions on the AIDS issue and encourage their commitment to address HIV/AIDS.

\* If you know someone living with HIV or AIDS, be a friend. Simple things like running an errand or cooking a meal can be extremely helpful to someone who may not be feeling well.

Call the confidential AIDS Information Line at (416) 825-6167. Acton and Georgetown call 878-8113, ext. 6167.

## care, stimulates discussion and ac- nothing to do with them, but statis-Volunteers wanted

An essential service for victims of rie. crime is in serious need of volunteers from the Milton area.

Halton police's Victim Services Unit is seeking people to help pro- said. vide emotional support and advice to victims and their families.

Ideally, the service requires 10 volunteers, said Anne Currie, co- ordinator for north Halton. The unit currently has only three in Milton.

Victim Services workers attend crime scenes and accompany police to death notifications.

They provide information on the criminal justice system, police procedure, and the status of an investigation as well as offer moral support to victims called as witnesses.

Volunteers — who should have a compassionate, caring nature — are slowly worked into the job, starting out doing office work, said Ms Cur-

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to assist crime victims

"Sometimes it takes up to a year" before workers deal one-on-one with victims in crisis situations, she

Participants fill out an application form, go through a screening process, and are interviewed. They also undergo five weekly training sessions at police headquarters in Oakville.

To get involved, contact Anne Currie at 878-5511, ext. 2436.

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