

Only \$65,000 raised so far

Christmas Seal donations are down drastically

By HOWARD MÖZEL
Special to The Champion

Ever since Christmas Seals were first issued 87 years ago to reduce tuberculosis, their role has expanded to help finance the fight against a host of lung diseases. This year, however, donations for the year are down drastically.

Halton Lung Association president Rick Zajac hopes the "Mail It" week campaign — which started Monday (Dec. 13th) — will push the organization closer to its \$160,000 Christmas Seal goal for 1993. So far, about \$65,000 has been raised compared with the \$74,000 collected last year by this

date. (The 1992 goal was \$157,000.)

"Christmas Seal income is down significantly this year," Mr. Zajac explained. "We hope people will respond generously during Mail It Week, which commemorates the 87th anniversary of the first issue of Christmas Seals. Those very first Seals, created to fight tuberculosis, had a big job to do. They still do today."

While remaining optimistic, Halton executive director Elizabeth Porter said a shortfall will have a definite impact on their programs.

"We will have to be awfully creative," she said, adding the Association may have to curtail some programs or begin charging for

others. "I really hope that we're going to make it."

Most programs run by the Association, such as its asthma support groups, are free, while its Countdown stop-smoking effort is the only one with a fee charged.

Ms Porter explained that while 30 per cent of the funds raised go to the Association's provincial and national bodies and to research, 70 per cent remain in Halton to provide community and school programs. This includes the fight against all lung disease ranging from lung cancer, emphysema and asthma to the growing concern over resurgent tuberculosis.

The Lung Association — whose financial

year ends March 31st — receives no money from the United Way nor any government funding.

In October, Ms Porter said letters were sent out to past contributors asking for donations. A "householder" — a package of educational information and some seals — was sent to every home in Halton. In January, Ms Porter said past contributors who have yet to respond will be mailed a "tactful reminder."

"The money is slow in coming in but we hope by the end of January we'll be well on our way," said Ms Porter.

The Halton Lung Association can be reached at 847-1033.

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