

# Region presses kids' group to get with the austerity program

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

The Milton Children and Youth Centre (MCYC) came to Halton's health and social services committee looking for a \$2,000 grant for its youth centre. Instead they got a reprimand.

Not only was MCYC turned away, they were reminded that without more effort to integrate their operation with Milton Community and Information Services (MCIS), they could have their annual grant reduced and eventually eliminated.

This year MCYC received an annual regional grant of \$6,419. Dennis Leavitt, MCYC chair, said the Odyssey Youth Centre operates one night per week and would use the \$2,000 grant to help pay for the rental of school gymnasiums. The centre is also working on getting donated materials to finish the inside of an industrial unit, in lieu of rent.

The centre has managed to get a portable basketball hoop donated and has raised about \$1,000 through various activities.

"Without the funding we would continue to operate in Milton on Tuesday nights but it would limit the programs and make the project a lot smaller," Mr. Leavitt said. He added the centre receives no funding from the Town of Milton.

Mr. Leavitt said negotiations with MCIS to amalgamate were slow and, while the two groups saw a merger as a logical outcome, actual amalgamation was not being discussed.

Merlin Kobsa, representing MCIS, said MCIS had not received information requested from MCYC and the group has been uncooperative in arranging meetings. MCIS provides administrative support for a

number of small social service agencies in Milton. MCYC would be linked as one segment under the MCIS umbrella, committee heard.

"MCYC should go to the local municipality for funds," said Burlington Mayor Walter Mulkeiwich, who also dismissed the need for groups to amalgamate in all cases. "Some organizations aren't going to amalgamate and some likely should not."

Milton Councillor Colin Best told the committee the Town of Milton already supports another youth centre, and that a third program is run out of the municipally-funded Milton Leisure Centre recreation complex.

## Buckle up those youngsters: police

Police are paying special attention to ensure that young passengers are buckling up in a spring seatbelt blitz that got underway Saturday.

The focus of the month-long blitz, which continues until May 20, is on children's use of safety seats and seat belts, says Halton Regional Police spokesman Sgt. Frank Phillips.

"All officers in the service have been directed to pay special attention to the younger passenger, as often children do not have a say with their own safety in a vehicle," he said.

"It's up to the caregiver or parent to ensure their child is properly buckled."

The fine for failing to buckle up is \$105 and two demerit points.



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