

Cupboard bare again

The Salvation Army is appealing to generous Miltonians for food bank donations as the holiday season approaches. Those attending the Santa Claus parade this weekend are asked to bring a non-perishable food item to help out the less fortunate. Sandy Harse of the Salvation Army (centre) has enlisted the help of Alma Gildea (right) and other members of local 271 of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, who will collect food along the route, as will members of the Milton Fire Department. Sparky the dalmatian, the department mascot, will likely be on hand too.



Photo by Graham Paine

Young slams status quo in education

By PAUL MITCHISON
Special to The Champion

A recent meeting designed to pay tribute to partnerships between industry and education became a highly-charged debate about the education system.

Halton Centre MPP Terence Young told a Breakfast with the Mayors meeting that schools are turning out students with poor math and English skills. Mr. Young's riding includes parts of southern rural Milton.

Amid stinging criticism of educational standards, Mr. Young said recent grads lack basic literacy and math skills, an observation he made while holding a previous job in which he was in charge of hiring.

"Young people graduating from high school are coming in for interviews with mathematics at an elementary level, and they do not know a sentence when they see one," said Mr. Young, adding employers are telling him the same thing.

"Many grads don't know how to show up for work on time, and think the workplace should adapt to them," he said.

The harsh comments came during a breakfast meeting paying tribute to a Halton Industry Council program that puts students into work situations.

While Mr. Young had lavish praise for the program, and said teachers do a good job, he pulled no punches in other areas. International testing shows Ontario students perform below students from other

industrial nations which spend less on education, he said.

The Tory MPP said too much money is invested outside of class — 47 per cent of the \$14 billion spent last year. Savings might be found, he said, if non-teachers could take jobs like guidance counselor, librarian and computer technician.

He also said sick pay retirement benefits for teachers cost \$300 million, taxpayers contribute more than needed for an already bloated teacher pension fund and bad teachers have been too insulated from being disciplined or fired.

The province is considering massive changes to education, including eliminating school boards. Mr. Young, who is par-

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