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Trustees persuaded to bump Holy Rosary down on priority list

School's re-building will have to wait

By CAROL BALDWIN
Special to The Champion

A group of West Oak Trails parents have convinced the Halton Roman Catholic Separate School Board to change its priority list for school construction.

However, the move leaves Milton's Holy Rosary School as second choice.

At Tuesday night's board meeting, the parents convinced trustees to make building a new school in Oakville's growing West Oak Trails area their number one priority.

The decision jumped the West Oak Trails school from number two on the list to number one — ahead of a replacement

school for Milton's Holy Rosary School.

The parents also told trustees what to do with their children in the event no money is forthcoming from the province for school construction.

The school board had intended to move the West Oak Trails students from Our Lady of Peace in the River Oaks subdivision in north Oakville to St. James on Morden Road, south of the Queen Elizabeth Way.

But parents balked at the move when notified of the board's intentions last January and convinced trustees to leave their children at Our Lady of Peace, if possible, or move them to St. Michael's on Sewell Drive north of the QEW.

"The community overwhelmingly did not want to go to St. James — it's farther away and it's not a feeder school for Loyola," said parent and spokesperson Susan David. "Our children are the third largest population in Our Lady of Peace. If there's a school going to be built, can we not stay until our school is built? We were told that Our Lady of Peace would be our holding school."

Not all school trustees agreed with changing the board's priority list.

"We're going to have to do something with that school (Holy Rosary) and do it soon," said Milton trustee Joseph Deoni.

He said St. Patrick's and Ascension in Burlington would soon need attention as well. "What are we going to do with our students in south-east Burlington. And something is happening in Halton Hills. I think we need to look at this whole list to meet the all-over needs of this board."

This sparked a spirited debate over rearranging not only the top three or four schools but those halfway down the 20-item list.

Burlington trustee Miriam van de Vrande was adamant about having the Burlington schools at the top of the list.

"St. Pat's doesn't even have a usable gymnasium and Ascension will become critical within a year. There will be no place to put the kids," she said, making a motion to "move St. Pat's to number one on the list, Ascension to number two and Holy Rosary to number three, then White Oaks Trails."

Her motion was defeated. It had been

• see SCHOOL on page 13

BUNNY FACES



Photos by Graham Paine



Five-year-old Kyle Pearson shows off his bunny ears and Easter egg face as he tries to guess how many jelly beans are in this jar, one of the many activities at the MCIS/Cherish Easter Fun Fair last weekend. Little Michelle Carol, meanwhile, found it a lot more fun to crawl in and out of this huge bunny cutout. See another Easter photo on page 10.

NEWSLINES

Minor hockey success forces lack of ice time

With the 1997 Milton Optimist Hockey Tournament running this weekend and the MMHA's remarkable playoff success a number of teams have had to look elsewhere for ice time.

Among them are the Spectrum Airways minor bantams, who will host game four of their best-of-five OMHA championship series with Peterborough at Alcott Arena in Georgetown today (Sunday) at 4:30 p.m.

If necessary, the Sandstone Transport midgets will battle Peterborough in game five of their series at the same venue today at 2:30 p.m.

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Homeless teens sleep in park, says drop-in centre volunteer

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Half a dozen homeless Milton youths slept in Rotary Park last summer, James DeMarsh, a volunteer with the Xcape Youth Centre on Mill Street, told town councillors recently.

He added that perhaps a dozen local kids regularly have trouble finding a place to sleep when tensions at home force them out.

Mr. DeMarsh was providing a report on the youth drop-in center, which has been open for one year. He said the center usually serves about 100 to 150 teens on Friday nights, a number which can swell to 400 during the summer months.

The Centre is supported by many Milton churches, government, service clubs and businesses and caters to teens aged 14 to 19 years.

He told the stories of two young people to illustrate some of the problems which the center has faced. A 16-year-old boy who was sleeping in Rotary Park all summer came to the centre with a serious respiratory condition.

Volunteers were able to arrange for medical attention and necessary prescriptions. They also placed the boy with a local family.

Another, a 15-year-old girl, was hanging around with two older guys in some trouble with police. One particular night, according to Mr. DeMarsh, the three engaged in some drinking, whereupon the two males took turns raping her. She came to the centre the next day, medical attention was sought, but she was afraid to press charges.

"There is an entire generation growing up in Milton whose sense of right and wrong is warped and

whose future is pretty bleak," said Mr. DeMarsh.

Mr. DeMarsh said the center would be requesting the same \$5,000 which the Town put forward last year. He also asked councillors to consider waiving property taxes on their building in lieu of a cash donation.

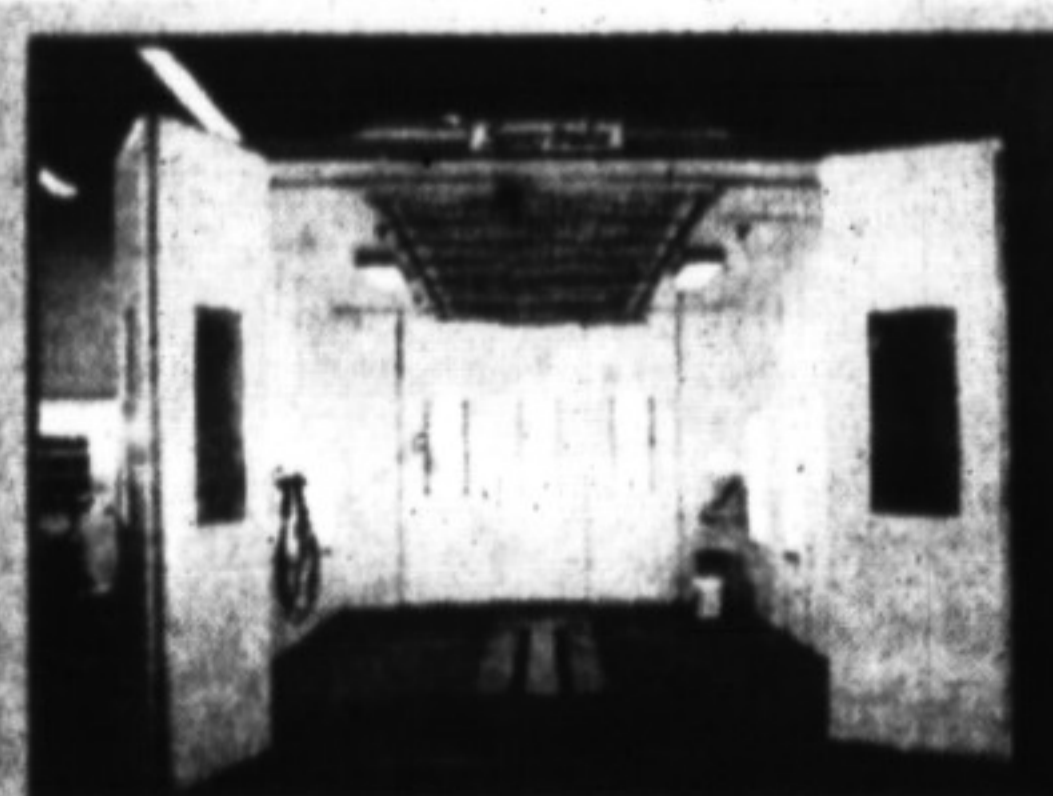
Xcape recently hired a full-time director, who was introduced to council.

Joe Elkington, who has experience working with homeless youth in Toronto, told councillors in the few weeks he has been here he has been inspired and challenged and is looking forward to working with local youths.

Mr. Elkington said in Toronto many homeless youth gravitate there from source communities like Milton.

• see CENTRE on page 8

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