

Craig Kielburger students left stranded on field trip

Teens left without ride back for several hours

By Ian Holroyd

SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Thanks to a shortage of bus drivers, more than 300 Craig Kielburger Secondary School students were left stranded on a recent field trip to Collingwood after the buses they were expecting didn't show up.

On September 24, after a long day of activities at Blue Mountain Resort, the Grade 10s, along with 13 teachers, assembled at 4:30 p.m. to wait for their ride back to school provided by local busing company Stock Transportation.

After waiting several hours, the school called a second bus company — Sinton Transportation out of Collingwood — to pick up the Milton students and drive them home.

The students were originally scheduled to return to the school between 6:30 and 7 p.m. but didn't arrive until approximately 10:30 p.m.

The four buses from Stock Transportation did eventually make it to Blue Mountain, but not until 9 p.m., four-and-a-half hours late. By then, the students had already left.

Principal Donna Taylor said she has heard from parents who have expressed their frustration over the experience.

"Parents were obviously upset because their kids were so late getting back," she said, "and then because we kept getting told over and over and over again, they'll be here soon."

Taylor explained the students were at Blue Mountain participating in a Grade 10 team-building and leadership event the school holds every year.

As a result of the tardy buses, some students went hungry because they didn't bring extra money to buy dinner. There were also students with medical issues who, according to Taylor, teachers kept watch over.

"If anybody would have been in trouble we certainly would have taken care of them on an individual basis," she said.

The principal said Stock Transportation has taken full responsibility for the incident and has offered to pay for the replacement buses from Sinton Transportation.

"Once I spoke to the general manager," she said, "he was great about it, very apologetic and I don't know internally what's been done

but I was pretty blunt with him about how upset we were."

In a statement from its parent company, National Express, Stock Transportation blamed the incident on a shortage of drivers.

The statement read, "Stock Transportation offers a sincere apology to the students and parents who were inconvenienced by these circumstances. Stock has covered the cost of the bus service provided and is working to hire a full complement of drivers to enable us to provide a higher level of customer service." Taylor also mentioned Stock Transportation offered to pay for a lunch for the students as well.

Siencera Arsenault, 22, said she was supposed to pick up her stepbrother from the school after the field trip.

According to Arsenault, parents received an email at around 4:30 p.m. indicating the buses were late and the kids wouldn't be back until between 8 and 8:30 p.m. Then, at around 7 p.m., she received a phone call from the

school telling her the buses didn't show up and the students would be even later.

She said she called the bus company to find out what was going on but no one answered the phone.

Arsenault said the incident was more than a little inconvenient because she has her own child to look after and at 10:30 p.m. her 15-year-old stepbrother couldn't walk home alone.

"The public needs to know about this because this shouldn't happen again," she said.

"I'm not sure exactly what has to be done but the public definitely needs to know about it because it's not something that should be taken lightly."

Marnie Denton, a spokesperson at the Halton District School Board, said a bus failing to pick up students is a rare occurrence.

"I don't think it happens very often," she said.

"It was an inconvenience and it was very unfortunate."

Environmental challenge contest now underway for individuals, faith groups

The environmental gauntlet has been thrown down.

The Halton-Peel chapter of Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) has presented an Environmental Action Challenge to individuals and faith groups in Halton to reduce their ecological footprint.

The challenge urges participants to focus on one new environmental action each month between now and June 2014. October's 'Kick the Bottle' initiative challenges individuals and groups to stop using plastic water bottles


in favour of a more environmentally-friendly option, such as reusable bottles.

November's challenge, 'Green Your Living and Worship Space', will see participants engage in such measures as replacing harsh chemical cleaners, weather-proofing spaces or starting/increasing recycling and composting.

For every action completed, individuals and groups will receive points toward prizes.

To sign up or for more information on the challenges and how to take part, visit www.greeningsacredspaces.net/halton.

The Corporation of the Town of Milton



• 905-878-7252
• TTY: 905-878-1657
• 1-800-418-5494 (Rockwood/Guelph)

www.milton.ca

Milton Transit **metro**

thanksgiving **stuff-a-bus**



Saturday, October 12, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Metro Milton, 1050 Kennedy Circle

Join us in donating non-perishable food items in support of the Salvation Army Food Bank.

905-864-4141

transit@milton.ca

milton.ca/transit

DISCOVER THE WONDERFUL WORLD
OF PLAYMOBIL TOYS!
AT OUR STORE IN MISSISSAUGA

playmobil

STORE HOURS:

Tuesday To Friday 10 am - 5 pm

Saturday 11 am - 4 pm

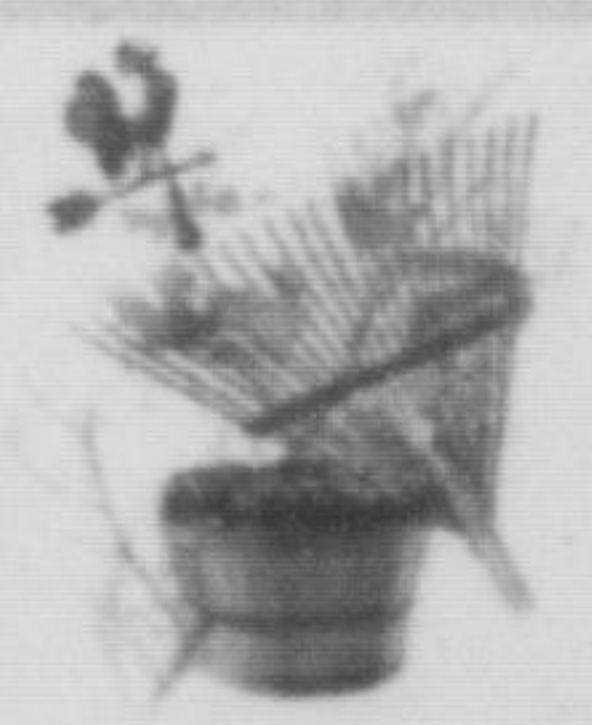
Special Gift with purchase

(while supplies last)

See in Store For Details



Bring in this flyer and
receive an extra
10% OFF
your purchase -
one per family



6430 KENNEDY ROAD, UNIT D, MISSISSAUGA
905-696-7529 • www.playmobil.ca