

Opinion

Reach out — you will find someone there

For most people, the holidays bring joy, excitement and a chance to reconnect with family and friends. For some, however, the festive season is anything but. Factors such as mental illness, depression, anxiety over issues such as finances, stress at work or grief over losing a loved one can seem to be magnified. Some people find it difficult to see through their troubles to find the light and warmth the season promises. We're pleased to see that our community is becoming increasingly attuned to the needs of others, particularly at times that can prove most difficult, such as the holidays. A variety of places of worship offer support and special resources, such as outreach programs and Blue Christmas services that trade the hustle and bustle of the holidays for quiet reflection.

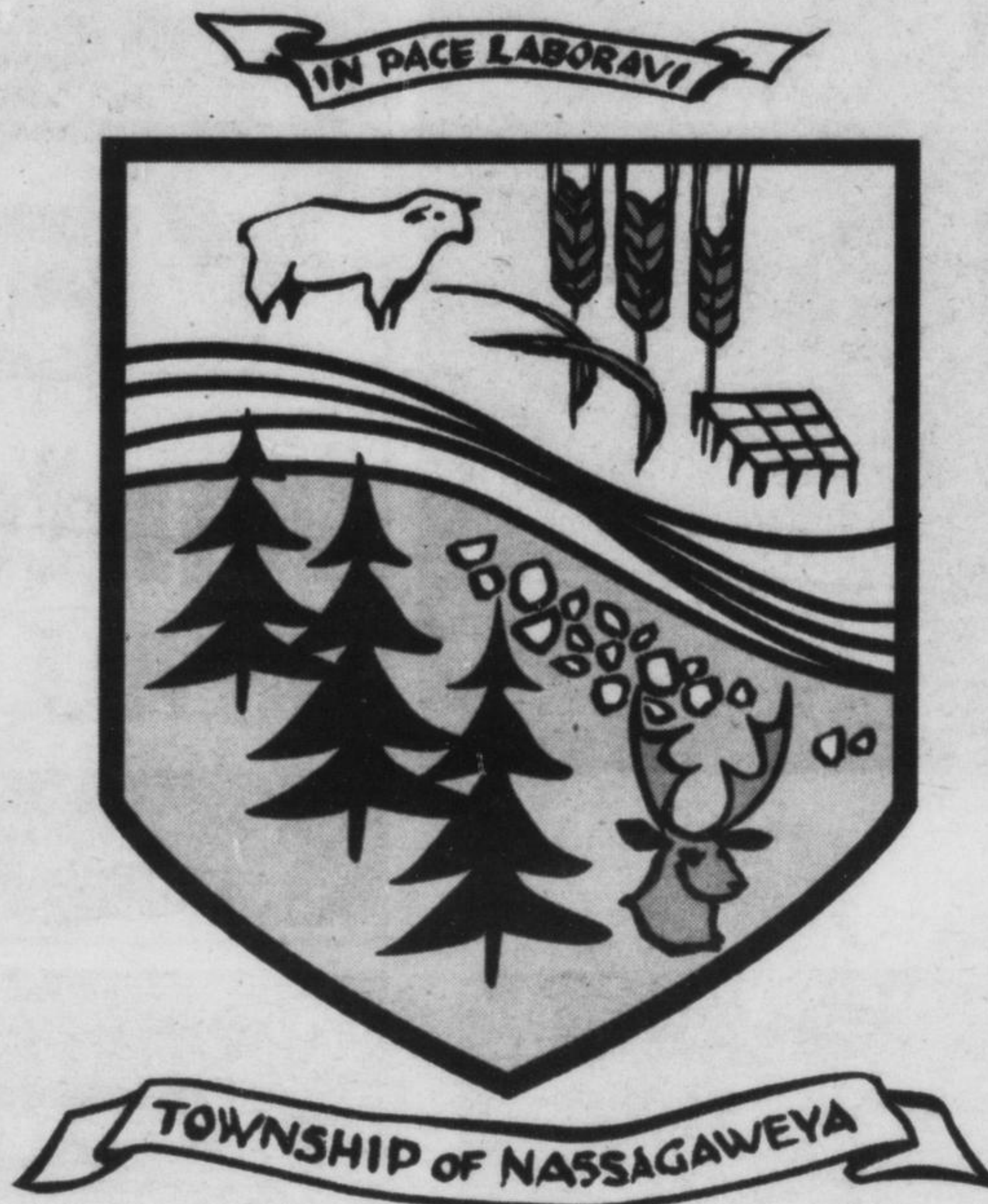
Schools, service clubs and volunteers reach out to those who may need a helping hand. They do so in many ways, including donations, in the hope of offering comfort and peace during the festive season. The needs of others are top of mind, and members of the community act accordingly. Contrary to a long-held myth, however, the number of incidents of death by suicide doesn't rise during the holidays.

In a report recently published on its website, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health detailed the results of a recent survey that for the first time included questions about suicide. The response indicated that 2.2 per cent, translating to about 230,000 individuals across Ontario, had seriously contemplated taking their own life in 2013. Some 7.1 per cent of survey respondents, rated their own mental health as poor. The numbers reflect a significant public health issue — every month of the year.

Our wish this Christmas is to send a message to all those who are struggling or know someone who is: those same resources, that goodwill and support that are evident throughout December, continue throughout the year.

Last week, the *Champion* and *insidehalton.com* featured a compilation of many local resources that can offer meaningful help over the holidays and beyond. We included a video online in which a handful of those agencies' representatives took time to 'introduce' themselves and extend the offer of help.

Our hope is that by bringing the resources to our readers, those who may need or want to avail themselves of those avenues of assistance, can do so. As well, others who may wonder how they can assist an individual or family they see to be in need, but don't know where to turn, can find someone to ask for help. Most of all, we want to get the message out that the resources are here at home, and those who need to reach them, must do just that.



Rural Roots

The Nassagaweya Crest was designed by local artist Elizabeth Hoey in 1967. Reeve W. Coulter explained: "It was time the township attained an identity. With regional government looming large on the horizon, who knows how long Nassagaweya will last as a township." The Latin motto translates as "Labour In Peace." The symbols on the shield depict the township's agriculture, forests, wildlife and rock deposits while the central lines depict the two watersheds of the township. The name "Nassagaweya" comes from the Indian word meaning "Parting of the Waters."

— Submitted by Nasagiweya Historical Society

Editor's Desk

Response to Champion's food and toy drive simply amazing

The *Champion's* holiday food and toy drive wrapped up Friday.

The response from local residents and *Champion* staff was so amazing, we advised the Salvation Army of Milton to make sure to bring a truck big enough to accommodate all of the donations, which left the bins overflowing.

We couldn't fit any more of the items under the *Champion's* Christmas tree, so we started storing the donations on our lunch table, and that was soon covered. A photo on page 16 shows just a fraction



Karen Miceli
Managing Editor

of the food and toy items that came in. At this time of the year, there are dozens of food and toy drives organized in town by schools, businesses and various other groups.

We have a good idea just how many there are because we publicize a lot of them, and we often take photos when the items are presented to their charities.

So it really touched me and others at the *Champion* that people took the time to come by our office with their donations to help those less fortunate this holiday season.

Thanks to office co-ordinator Sharon Rowley for organizing the drive, but most of all thank you to Milton residents for their generosity.

I know I won't forget it.

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