

# MYAC members are 'very, very inspiring,' says Councillor Boughton

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Members to be the ones "sitting around council's table in the future," has a structure, a mandate, a growing membership base, a laundry list of achievements and future goals.

And the youths are as young as 13 years old. "These kids are very, very inspiring, a great group of young men and women. If this is the future we have coming up, we're in good hands," said Councillor Mike Boughton.

In 2014, MYAC's accomplishments included the development and implementation of an annual Youth Awards program, where five kids were honoured for personal triumphs, diversity initiatives, as well as leadership in the arts, environment and community. The students developed the qualification criteria, created a brochure outlining award categories

and scored each application.

The kids also organized meetings with guest speakers ranging from transit advisors to people from the Halton Multicultural Council and investment bankers.

"These are the issues they want to talk about. Their ideas have evolved and become more sophisticated each year," said Cindy Lunau, who served as the council representative on the MYAC for 16 years.

Lunau reminisced about the time the MYAC set out to create a skate park facility in Milton 20 years ago, when the group only had about ten members. With help from a task force assembled by Town staff, a portable skate park was created, which eventually evolved into a permanent one on Thompson Road.

When Lunau joined as a representative in

1997, she remembered one of the first initiatives was the Canada Day Basketball Toss at Rotary Park.

"It was literally nothing more than tossing a basketball into a garbage can," she said.

"That evolved into a whole 'teen zone' during the Canada Day celebrations near Town Hall." The committee also hosted a fashion design crash course at the Milton Centre for the Arts and organized free drop-in events during National Youth Week, which included dodge ball, basketball, stick n' puck and swimming.

According to Lunau, they have also been instrumental in providing feedback to various committees about issues such as library hours, the use of municipal facilities and transit issues, including the timeliness of buses and inefficiencies with the routes.

"They're the ones taking the bus, they're the ones most affected," said Lunau.

Irena Amin, a member of the MYAC, said the group also organizes daily draws for free transit passes for the month to help people who rely on public transit to get around Milton.

Pooja Menon, a member of the MYAC who spoke at the council meeting, listed the goals and priorities of the committee for the upcoming year. These include greater emphasis on recruiting membership from

Milton's diverse population, developing and promoting a Youth Week Celebration calendar, hosting a second annual Youth Awards night, organizing a meet-and-greet with town council, providing input into items being presented to council that impact local youth and increasing advertising opportunities through social media.

Maaz Haq, a representative of the MYAC, urged council members to "like us on Facebook" and "follow us on Twitter" in hopes of getting a head start on the group's 2015 goals. The MYAC presents in front of council twice each year. Lunau said the next presentation is sure to be just as significant to council as the last.

"We often speak about the way Milton has grown. Well, the biggest cohort of kids in this community will be teenagers soon. If we want to be prepared for the needs of our growing community, then the needs of our youth are absolutely critical," she said.

For more information on the MYAC, visit <http://www.milton.ca/en/townhall/miltonyouthadvisorycommittee.asp> or search them on Facebook or on Twitter (@MiltonYAC).

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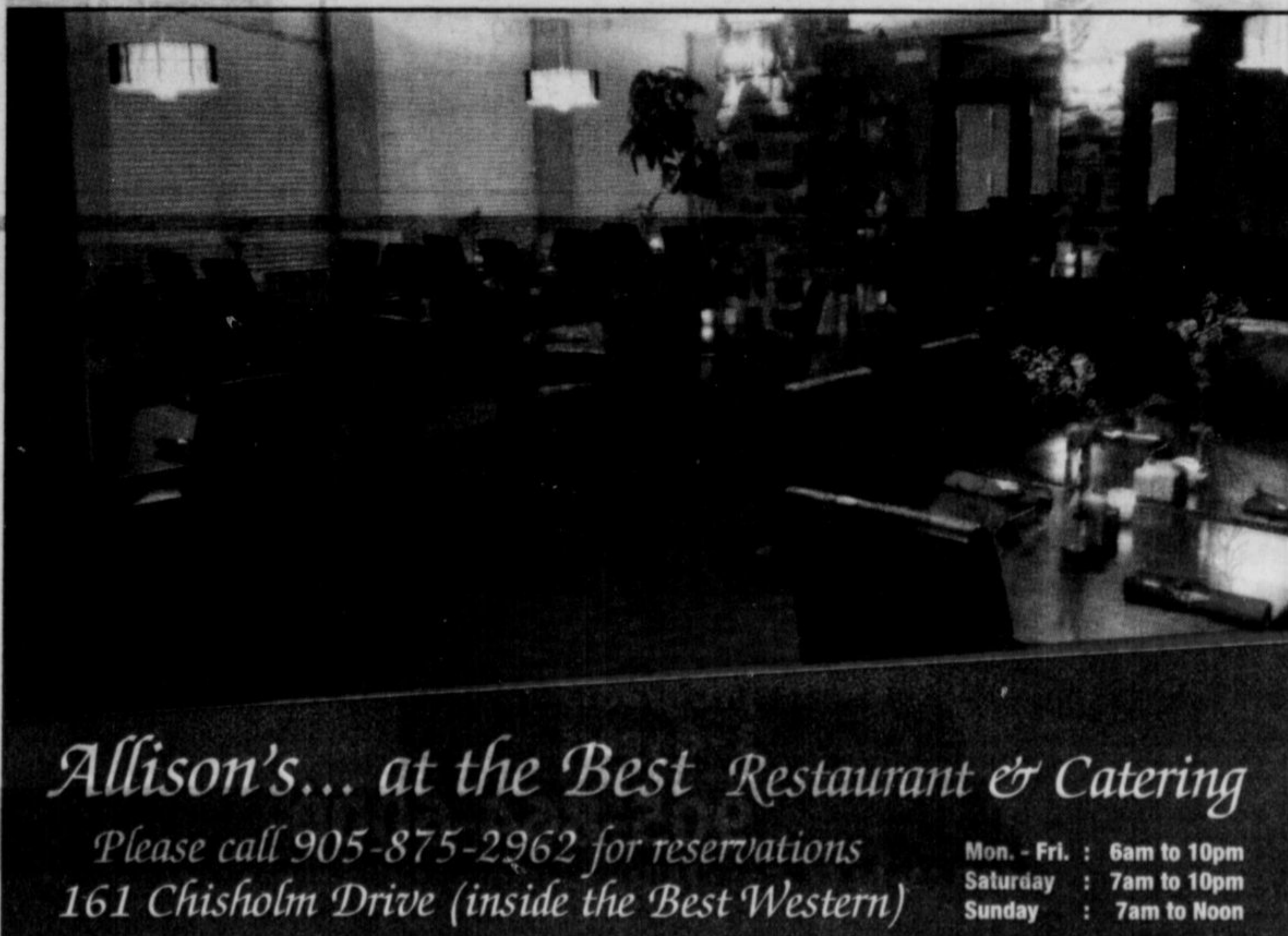
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