

Betrayal lasts lifetime for victims

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sexually abused their daughter beginning when she was a toddler. Eventually, he was convicted of sexual assault and sexual interference.

But Beth and her children were left with the emotional scars of their abuse.

They turned to the York Region Abuse Program, known as YRAP, for counselling.

Beth considers her family fortunate because they were able to get the therapy they needed almost immediately.

However, there are now more than 40 children waiting for treatment. More than a quarter of those children are under the age of seven.

Beth went through several YRAP therapy courses. Her daughter attended a few counselling sessions but chose not to continue because she didn't want to dwell on the abuse in her past.

However, Beth saw the positive effect YRAP had on her daughter when a schoolmate disclosed that she was being sexually abused. The daughter grabbed the girl's hand and marched her down to the vice-principal's office so her friend could get the help she needed.

"That's what YRAP did for (my daughter). She went from being a victim, to being an advocate for her friend," Beth said.

"I'm glad YRAP was there for us. If it hadn't been, it would have meant your feelings aren't validated and you feel like you're still in the abuse, or worse."

YRAP, founded in 1987, provides a number of programs for victims of childhood sexual abuse including sessions for victims, their families and offenders. It also offers education and support, a court support group and an abuse prevention program.

On Oct. 25, YRAP is holding a fundraising gala called An Evening of Hope with the aim of raising \$50,000 to support its programs. The formal masquerade party, which will be held at Le Parc in Thornhill, will feature a dinner and open bar, entertainment by The Legends of Rock and Roll, dancing, exotic face painting and eye masks and live and silent auctions. The cost of the gala is \$125 per person.

According to Heather Robinson, a clinical

coordinator and social worker with YRAP, the agency needs three full-time staff members to eliminate the waiting list. "If we had three full-time sexual assault therapists, we could meet the need."

Victims of sexual abuse are now waiting more than a year for treatment once they have worked up the courage to disclose abuse and approach YRAP for therapy.

Jan Austin, YRAP's clinical director, said research shows one in four girls and one in five boys will be sexually assaulted before their 18th birthday.

"It's the hidden epidemic in our culture."

Ms Austin stressed that there is a perception that violent sexual abuse against very young children is the most traumatic to the victim. But each victim, and their families, react differently to abuse. Often, it is the parents who feel they have failed to protect their child. Sexual abuse can sometimes wound a teenager more than a young child.

According to clinical coordinator and social worker Allison McKelvey, if violence is part of the abuse, it is sometimes easier for the victim to recognize that the crime being committed against them is unacceptable than it is for the child who is manipulated by an offender appearing to be loving.

"Over 90 per cent of childhood sexual abuse, it's by someone familiar (to the child). In the vast majority of cases, it's intra-familial. So this is about betrayal," Ms Austin said.

"There is a huge disruption to the family (when the abuse is disclosed). The family is thrown into chaos. It's often harder on the parents than the children."

Ms. Robinson agreed.

"When people talk about childhood sexual assault, they think it's only about the child. In many cases, the children are more resilient than the adults. That's why YRAP needs to be there for everyone affected," she said.

For more information about YRAP, call 1-905-853-1023.

To book your reservations for the gala, call 905-773-5706 or e-mail a yrap@istar.ca.

SEX ABUSE MYTHS AND FACTS

When a child or youth is sexually abused, victims and their families can get conflicting information from family members, friends and professionals.

The York Region Abuse Program has published a brochure of myths and facts about childhood sexual abuse.

Myths include:

• *Children make up stories or lie about sexual abuse.* While children do make up stories, they seldom lie about sexual abuse. Children who haven't been abused usually don't have explicit knowledge of intimate sexual behaviour. Statistics indicate most reports of child sexual abuse are true.

• *Abuse is most often committed by strangers.* Actually, most abuse is committed by someone the victim knows and trusts.

• *Offenders look sleazy, cruel or unusual.* In fact, offenders come from every walk of life and have no distinct "look". Perpetrators can be fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, babysitters, coaches, teachers, doctors, social workers, religious leaders or neighbours.

• *Acts like fondling or French kissing aren't really sexual abuse and don't harm the young victim.* In reality, any form of direct or indirect sexual contact with a child or youth by an adult or older child is abusive. Every victim will react differently to the abuse.

Facts include:

• *A victim assaulted by a person of the same sex will not be turned into a homosexual by the assault.* The sex of the perpetrator doesn't determine the victim's sexual orientation.

• *Children don't become victims of sexual abuse because they have bad or neglectful parents.* Offenders use a range of tactics to gain access to their victims. Perpetrators are often experts in manipulating children.

• *Offenders alone are responsible for their actions, not their victims.* Moreover, perpetrators are responsible for their behaviour whether they are taking drugs or consuming alcohol.

• *There is no research available that supports the notion victims of childhood sexual abuse grow up to be pedophiles.*

The Regional Municipality of York NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 37

A public meeting will be held in accordance with Section 17(15) of the Planning Act, as amended May 22, 1996, to inform the public and receive comments on proposed Amendment 37 to the Official Plan for The Regional Municipality of York, File No. D05.102.57:
Wednesday, November 6, 2002

1:30 PM

Committee Room A
York Region Administrative Centre
17250 Yonge St., Newmarket, Ontario

Purpose and effect of this Amendment:

The Amendment deals with four subsections of the Natural Environment section of the Regional Official Plan, Map 2 - Significant Natural Features and Map 3 - Forest Resources.

The specific sections and map changes are as follows:

Wetlands:

- Update the wetlands mapping shown on Map 2 to include evaluated wetlands identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources since the original ROP mapping was undertaken in 1994. Some of these wetlands are new areas, not presently shown on Map 2, others are already shown on Map 2; and their location is being more accurately depicted.
- Rename the section from "Wetland Areas" to "Wetlands".
- Establish a minimum 30 metre vegetated protection zone around individual wetlands shown on Map 2.
- Add "site alteration" as a defined term within the Plan and as an activity that is prohibited within wetlands and the minimum vegetated protection zone.

Environmental Policy Areas (EPA):

- Minor changes are proposed to the EPA delineations on Map 2 to account for updated information from both the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Forest Cover:

- Changes are proposed to Map 3 - Forest Resources to include forest patches that meet or exceed the minimum forest size of .5 acre identified in the Regional Tree By-law and more accurately depict forest patch locations.
- Amend the minimum size of forest patch included in the Definitions Section of the Regional Official Plan to .5 acre, amend the references in the definitions and policy from "Regionally Significant Forest" to "Forested Lands".

The Rouge North Management Plan:

- Clarify existing Policy 2.1.17 of the Regional Plan to assist municipalities that are contemplating amendments to their Official Plans for the Rouge North Management Plan.

For additional information:

A copy of the proposed Amendment as well as background information will be available for inspection at the York Region Planning and Development Services Department (see address and telephone numbers at the end of this notice) from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on regular business days. A copy of the Amendment as well as all maps and background information is available for viewing or printing from the Region of York website: www.region.york.on.ca.

Approval process:

Following the public meeting, the Council of the Regional Municipality of York may, if it chooses, adopt the proposed Amendment, and give notice of the decision to adopt the Amendment.

Pursuant to Ontario Regulation 525/97, made under the Planning Act, amendments to the Official Plan for the Regional Municipality of York commenced on or after January 19, 1998, are exempt from the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Once notice of decision is given, if you have any objections to this amendment you may file with the Clerk of The Regional Municipality of York, within the time specified in the notice of decision, a notice of appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

NOTE:

1. If a person or public body that files a notice of appeal of a decision of The Regional Municipality of York in respect of the proposed Official Plan Amendment does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or does not make written submissions to The Regional Municipality of York before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted, the Ontario Municipal Board may dismiss all or part of the appeal.
2. If you wish to be notified of the adoption of the proposed Official Plan Amendment you must make a written request to the Clerk of The Regional Municipality of York in care of the address of the York Region Administrative Centre at the end of this notice.

Any person may attend the public meeting and/or make oral or written submissions either in support of or in opposition to the proposed Plan/Amendment.

If you have questions in regard to this notice, you may contact Barbara Jeffrey in the Regional Planning and Development Services Department at the telephone numbers below. Written submissions regarding this proposed Amendment, referring to File No. D05.102.57 as noted above, should be made to:

Commissioner of Planning and Development Services
York Region Administrative Centre
Box 147, 17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6Z1
Telephone: (905) 895-1231
1-877-464-9675
Facsimile: (905) 895-3482
Email: amendments@region.york.on.ca

Date of this Notice: October 11, 2002

 York Region

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