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Victims unite for change

New group demands just treatment for victims of crime and their families

By Lindsey Craig

OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Why is it that criminals, murderers, rapists, receive counselling in prison, while victims and the families of victims, who so desperately need the support, are left to suffer alone?

Why is it that criminals have free transportation to and from courthouses, free meals during their hearings, while victims and their families must pay their own way?

Why is it that murderers have the opportunity to earn university degrees while their young victims will never have this chance?

Why is it that prisoners enjoy leisurely activities, such as horseback riding and golf, while the families of their victims work hard to pay legal fees and are unable to afford such luxuries?

These questions and frustrations are only a few of many shared by victims of crime and their families, who have suffered further at the hands of the Canadian criminal "justice" system. They gathered

in Oakville at Chartwell Baptist Church on Saturday to launch the organization Victims United For Change. Although the event served as forum to speak about the changes the new group hopes to make in the legal system, it was also a memorial service for victims of violent crime, including Jason Petrie, a Mississauga man, murdered 10 years ago at age 21.



Tammy Petrie



Jason Petrie

Spearheading the group is Oakville resident Tammy Petrie, 33, Jason Petrie's older sister. Since his death, she and her family continue to face countless obstacles within the legal system in their quest to see that those responsible

for his murder are held accountable. Over the years, Tammy has concentrated her pain and anger into a positive outlet, contacting other victims of crime and families of victims to create a network of citizens who share a common goal — to give rights back to the innocent.

"Ten years ago today, July 12, my brother became a victim, but ever since, my family has been victimized by the

(See 'Victims' page A4)

Salvation Army van stolen

The Oakville Salvation Army was dealt a blow to its community outreach efforts on the weekend when the van used to transport seniors and deliver food was stolen.

The sage green, 2000 Plymouth Voyager was last seen around 4 p.m. Friday in the parking lot of the Citadel at 1225 Rebecca St. and was discovered missing Saturday morning.

The van is an integral part of the lives of many Salvation Army clients, such as the seniors who need to make medical appointments and those who have food dropped off at their residences.

"It's in service almost every day of the week," said Community Service Co-ordinator Tim Howlett. "This theft

has crippled us."

This summer, the vehicle was being put good use taking seniors and children on day trips, to summer camp and for rides to and from Bible school. The Moms and Tots camp is also coming up.

The stolen van was bought two years ago with money from donations to replace an old, much less reliable van which the Salvation Army has now fallen back on to provide service. Just last week, however, the vehicle cost the Sally Ann \$400 in repairs.

Anyone with information about the theft is encouraged to call police or Howlett at 827-5324, ext. 22. If the van is not recovered, money for a replacement can be donated by calling Howlett.



Jamie Smith • Oakville Beaver

FUTURE STAR!: Seventeen-month-old Marisa Ferencia takes in the Can-Am Challenge at Sheridan College on the weekend. See Sports section for action photo and story.

Don't water the lawn

Halton Region has imposed a temporary ban on outdoor water usage in an effort to keep reservoirs supplied for fire protection and essential household needs.

The unseasonably dry weather, combined with heavy water use, has contributed to the need to enforce the bylaw restricting outdoor watering activity. Residents should refrain from watering their lawns and washing their cars and driveways.

Flower and vegetable gardens should be watered only with a watering can or hose with a spray nozzle, as opposed to a sprinkler or a free-running hose, in order to avoid using more water than is necessary.

Recently sodded or seeded lawns are exempt from the restrictions.

"These restrictions have become necessary as the dry weather continues," said Halton Region Director of Environmental Services Ric Robertshaw. "We hope residents will acknowledge the need for these temporary measures and comply with them."

Halton Region Planning and Public Works staff are monitoring the situation and will advise residents once the restrictions have been lifted.

The following are some answers to frequently asked questions about the water ban:

• Is there a fine for failing to comply with the restrictions?

The watering ban has been imposed in accordance with bylaw 93-89, which allows for fines of up to \$2,000.

• My neighbours are watering their lawn. What should I do?

Since the watering ban has only been in place a short while, some people may not yet have heard about it. Concerned residents can let their neighbours know there is a watering ban in effect.

(See 'New' page A3)



Jamie Smith • Oakville Beaver

Halton paramedic John Carter talks to a patient en route by ambulance to the hospital.

In good hands

Emergency Medical Services personnel are more than hospital taxi drivers

By Lindsey Craig

OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Ever since Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were downloaded to the Region of Halton, the lives of area residents have been in much better hands and the jobs of paramedics made much easier.

This, according to Halton Region paramedics Wally Williams and John Carter.

"There has been a huge difference in service, there are more vehicles, more equipment, more staff," said Williams, who has worked as a paramedic in Halton since 1978.

"Since the Region has taken over, there are more things in place for paramedics working with patients," he added.

Today the health department of Halton Region has 135 paramedics and 25 emergency vehicles including ambulances, response vehicles and support units. Halton Region assumed responsibility for EMS in August 2000, when it was downloaded from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Before that, the service resided with a private company, funded by the Ministry.

One of the most significant changes since the Region took over is that more funding has been allotted to increasing the

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