



The Regional Municipality of Halton  
www.halton.ca

# More Blue & Green During the Holidays



### Items for Blue Box

- Cardboard boxes
- Fine paper & envelopes
- Newspaper
- Boxed beverage containers
- Plastic bottles
- Aluminum food & pop cans



### Items for GreenCart

- Turkey, ham & meat, including bones
- Challah bread
- Gingerbread
- Latkes, fruits and vegetables
- Paper napkins
- Paper plates and cups



### Items for Garbage

- Clear moulded plastic packaging
- Plastic film
- Bubble wrap
- Plastic plates and cups
- Wrapping paper
- Bows & ribbons

**Christmas Trees:** Christmas tree collection occurs in January (urban areas only). Check your Waste Management Calendar or [www.halton.ca/waste](http://www.halton.ca/waste) for exact dates. Remove all tinsel, lights, decorations and plastic bags before collection. Ensure trees do not become stuck or frozen in snow banks.

## More Blue & Green for a Better Planet

1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, Ontario L6M 3L1  
Tel: 905-825-6000 • Toll Free: 1-866-442-5866 • TTY: 905-827-9833 • [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca)

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NIKKI WESLEY / OAKVILLE BEAVER

**BOOKS FOR UGANDA:** Grade 11 Robert Bateman students (l-r) Jeremiah Witt, of Oakville, Gina Markle, LaShawn Murray, and Sakie Obata have been collecting books to send to Uganda through the Invisible Children Book Drive since October.

## Students exceed book drive goal for Invisible Children

By David Lea  
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

They never thought it would get this big. Oakville resident Jeremiah Witt, 16, and friends from Robert Bateman Secondary School are celebrating unfathomable success in gathering around 28,000 books for children's literacy programs in Uganda.

The project began in mid-October when the non-profit organization Invisible Children paid a visit to Witt's church to raise awareness of the plight facing the children in Uganda.

"Since 1987 there has been a civil war going on in Uganda, 60 per cent of the rebel army is composed of child soldiers and since the war began more than 66,000 children have been abducted," said Witt.

"Invisible children's aim is to make the lives of the children of Uganda easier by promoting education and literacy."

Witt noted documentaries, shown at his church by Invisible Children, about what the children of Uganda are going through were so moving he felt he had to take action calling on a number of friends to help this cause.

"We feel really fortunate to have an education and the opportunity to be able to go to school," said Sakie Obata, 16, a recruited book drive helper. "It's really sad children in Uganda have had to go through so much trouble in their lives. I thought it would be really great to help them by sending them books and empowering them with education."

The book drive began with a goal of 10,000, which many participants thought was unobtainable, but through great perseverance and innovation the group soon made the impossible more than possible.

"The first thing we did was talk to the teachers and create boxes and organize a way we would collect them, just doing it inside the school at first," said LaShawn Murray, 16. "Then we talked to the neighbourhood and other schools and different organizations in Oakville and Burlington. We also approached several different churches."

Murray noted that Halloween gave the group a golden opportunity to get their message out

while they were taking their brothers and sisters trick or treating.

"When we were taking the kids out we would just talk to our neighbours and try to get them to bring in books and we actually collected a lot of books on Halloween as well," said Murray.

Other successes followed when Witt's church (Walton Memorial United Church) donated around 3,000 books to the cause and when the Oakville Public Library group, Friends of the Library, threw in around 2,000 books.

Witt's group was also quick to point out that school staff aided them in their efforts and greatly contributed to their success.

"A teacher, Laurie Grinton, has been emailing teachers and schools all over Halton and as a result Oakville Trafalgar has sent a whole bunch of books from their book drive that they didn't end up doing anything with," said Gina Markle, 16. "Also elementary schools got an email she sent and they sent over some books from their libraries that they weren't using anymore."

Robert Bateman teacher, Christina Parmigiani, who has been assisting with the book drive, said the true credit goes to the students.

"I tried to be a voice to the administration and staff, but these students have essentially taken this on themselves," she said. "It's truly remarkable to see learning in action, how important knowledge is to them and their willingness to spread education around the world."

However, with success comes work. The students have had to sort through each and every one of the 28,000 books they've received to make sure they are appropriate for the children who will be receiving them.

Harlequin Romance novels and a book entitled *The Sex Atlas* are among the titles that had to be excluded. The group is considering the possibility of selling these books and adding a cash donation to their existing book contribution.

The massive inventory of books is currently being stored at Robert Bateman Secondary School where it will stay until mid January when Invisible Children arrives to collect them.

Books are still being collected. Donations can be made at the school office, located at 5151 New St. in Burlington.