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See Page 5



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**By Richard
Bercuson**

This just in!

All Whitby councillors and staff may need to undergo training in method acting so as to remain stone-faced and rigid during all council proceedings.

Say what? On Monday, council voted to amend a

procedural bylaw so as to allow the public to record (ie. videotape) proceedings. The Town’s Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services Francesco Santaguida, when asked what other municipalities allowed this, provided just one that he knew of: Caledon. A councillor who evidently has not yet registered for the method acting course commented on the amendment, “I don’t understand what the purpose is.”

Had she framed it in a question, the not-so-rhetorical query might have elicited some interesting responses. Now we’ll never know.

To be clear, you won’t be able to just waltz into council chambers with your camera and tap “record.” Residents will need to first obtain permission and then just behave themselves. The

amendment (section 5.12) lists what constitutes unacceptable behaviours. As yet, there’s no word if extra security will be needed to drag the amateur cinematographer from the room for hopping about to get better close-ups.

There will surely be occasions in the near future when an over zealous resident, armed with a smartphone and selfie stick, will have filmed a councillor reacting in a manner which, to them, is evidence of, well, whatever comes to mind. It is reminiscent of the famous “Seinfeld” show episode when Jerry scratched his nose while driving just as his girlfriend was in an adjacent car. “Not a pick!” he shouted which it appeared to be just that because of the angle. I admit to having executed a similar action with my own children and grandkids, always greeted with groans. So consider the visual perspective.

Meanwhile, councillors and Town staff, be wary.

Are you grabbing a tissue to blow your nose? No, the screen grab posted on Facebook will suggest Councillor X ignoring

what was said though he/she was drying a wet spot on the desk from spilled water.

Grimacing and tightening your jaw? No, the Instagram clip will clearly show Councillor Y reacting negatively to a motion when in fact he/she had a bad back from a fall and was stretching in the chair.

Writing during a resident’s impassioned presentation? No, the TikTok video, put to music, will splice in, with the help of AI, a hand writing a kid’s birthday card. See? Said councillor doesn’t care about what you’re saying.

All council meetings are streamed and archived. Director’s cuts don’t exist because everything is live. As such, they don’t offer much excitement, which may be the issue. Someone speaks, the camera is on them and no one else, cut to an overhead shot. Apparently that’s not enough anymore.

It’s not just a slippery slope; we’re now at the bottom of the slope with our feet dangling over the edge of an abyss.

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Small Steps to Maintain New Goals

By Brittany Dunbar



The start of a new year often inspires people to set ambitious health and nutrition goals. Yet by February, many of those well-intentioned resolutions have already faded. The key to making nutrition goals stick in 2026 isn't perfection; it's consistency, flexibility, and a realistic approach that fits your daily life.

Rather than overhauling your entire diet overnight, start by building on habits you already have. Small, sustainable changes are far more effective than extreme restrictions. Adding an extra serving of vegetables at dinner, drinking more water throughout the day, or planning balanced snacks can have a meaningful impact over time. These manageable steps build confidence and create momentum that carries you forward.

Aim for balance

Another important factor is shifting away from the "all-or-nothing" mindset. One indulgent meal or a few off-plan days do not erase your progress. In fact, allowing room for enjoyment is part of a healthy relationship with food. When people label foods as "good" or "bad," it often leads to guilt and cycles of overeating. Instead, aim for balance: mostly nutrient-dense foods that fuel your body well, with flexibility for social events and favourite treats.

Planning is also a powerful tool for success. Busy schedules are one of the biggest barriers to healthy eating. Setting aside time each week to grocery shop, prep ingredients, or plan simple meals can prevent last-minute decisions that don't

align with your goals. Keeping nutritious options visible and convenient — such as washed fruit, cut vegetables, yogurt, or nuts — makes it easier to make supportive choices.

Proper focus

It's equally important to ensure your goals are performance and energy-focused, not just appearance-driven. Notice how balanced meals improve your focus at work, your energy during workouts, and your mood throughout the day. These immediate benefits are often more motivating than changes on the scale, which naturally fluctuate.

Finally, remember that support makes a difference. Whether it's a registered dietitian, a coach, a workout partner, or a friend with similar goals, accountability and encouragement help maintain motivation when enthusiasm dips.

As 2026 unfolds, think of nutrition not as a short-term resolution, but as an ongoing investment in your health. Progress comes from the choices you make most often, not the ones you make perfectly.

Brittany Dunbar, MSc, is a Brooklin sport nutritionist and personal trainer.
Email: brittfandc@gmail.com


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Community Care Durham Seeks Leaders

David Brazeau knows firsthand the meaningful impact a committed board of directors can have on a not-for-profit organization.

With more than a decade of board leadership experience, including two six-year terms as board chair, David brought his passion for governance and community service to Community Care Durham (CCD) in 2023, joining the organization's board of directors.

An accomplished communications professional with experience in both the private and public sectors, David views board involvement as a powerful way to contribute his skills in support of a meaningful cause.

"Being a board director at Community Care Durham allows us to share our knowledge with an organization dedicated to helping people live more independently in their own homes," he said. "It's a great way to volunteer alongside a smart and caring group of people."

During his time on the board, David gained a deeper appreciation for CCD's evolving role within Durham Region. He is particularly proud of the organization's growing integration with hospitals and community partners, which

strengthens service delivery and improves client outcomes.

"It's an admirable and unique quality that truly serves the community, while enhancing the value of the support services provided," he said.

David also values the dedication of CCD's board members, all of whom serve as volunteers and contribute their professional expertise and shared commitment to improving lives across the region.

"We're doing this because we want to be here, and that's what I love about our board," he added. CCD is currently seeking new

board members to help guide the organization's strategic direction and support its mission. We are looking for individuals with experience in:

- Legal & Regulatory
- Board Governance & Effectiveness
- Human Capital & Organizational Sustainability
- Regulated Health/Clinical Governance

Interested candidates are invited to forward their resume to Rosanna Keys at rkeys@communitycaredurham.on.ca.

Your leadership could help shape the future of care in our community.

What You Need To Know This Week In Whitby



Get Ready For A Fun Family Day

Celebrate Family Day with your loved ones on Monday, February 16 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Enjoy free skating and swimming, face painting, a balloon artist, and more. Thank you to our lead sponsor, Gerdau. For the full list of locations, activities, and schedules, visit whitby.ca/FamilyDay

Community Grant Applications Now Open

The Mayor's Community Development Fund (MCDF) is now accepting applications for Lead Grants up to \$25,000 and Community Grants up to \$5,000. Due to the fact that it's an election year, we will only be accepting applications for the Mayor's Community Development Fund Lead Grant and Community Grants up to March 31, 2026. whitby.ca/CommunityFunds



Whitby Launches AI Chatbot on whitby.ca

The Town of Whitby recently launched WhitBEE (Whit), an AI-powered chatbot on whitby.ca. Available 24/7, Whit makes it quicker to find information like permits and events without searching multiple webpages. The Chatbot is in its first phase, with improvements planned, and will become smarter as more people use it. Chat with WhitBEE at whitby.ca



P: 905-430-4300
E: info@whitby.ca

whitby.ca



Volunteers needed for Newcomer Advisory Table

The Durham Local Immigration Partnership (DLIP) is seeking five residents from the community, who can provide first-hand experience and insight as a newcomer, to join the Newcomer Advisory Table (NAT). DLIP is a dynamic network dedicated to fostering a welcoming environment for newcomers in Durham Region.

Members of NAT will serve a one-year term with an option to renew.

When: The deadline for submissions is February 16, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.

and will support the work of the DLIP and its priority action areas:

- Champion collective action
- Build inclusive communities
- Embrace innovation and responsiveness

An honorarium may be available for members' participation, reflecting an appreciation for members' time and expertise. For eligibility details and information on how to apply, please visit durhamimmigration.ca/NAT-recruitment.

About DLIP

Why: The NAT will help to inform the strategic direction of DLIP

The DLIP plays a crucial role in mobilizing community resources to tackle the challenges newcomers face, while acting as an incubator for innovative ideas that strengthen the overall settlement landscape. NAT members' lived experience provides valuable perspective and advice on DLIP activities.

Learn more about the DLIP's work and priorities in our **Community and Inclusion Plan**, and information about our existing NAT members.

HEARTS AROUND THE WORLD

Valentines needed

Spread Valentine's Day kindness across Canada and the world!

Our Kindergarten classes in Brooklin, Ontario, Canada are starting a project called "Hearts Around the World". Our goal is to collect a Valentine's day card from every Canadian province and territory (and hopefully other countries) by Valentine's Day. We will track our progress on a map as cards arrive!

Why it matters: Our students are learning about kindness, community and Canada!

Please share this post and let's see if we can collect a Valentine from coast to coast and around the world!

Please mail cards to:

Kindergarten Classes St. John Paul II

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L1M 2L9

Whitby Library Offers Home Energy Tool Kit

With affordability top of mind for many Ontarians, the Whitby Public Library has introduced a new way for homeowners to better understand their energy usage. The library, in collaboration with the Town of Whitby, has introduced loanable Home Energy Tool Kits designed to guide residents through a step-

by-step home energy audit.

Packed with smart tools like a Milwaukee Infrared Temp-Gun, a digital Lux reader, and an Aranet4 air monitor, the kits make it easy for people to understand their daily energy habits. The kits come with activities and an information guide with suggestions on how to

lower your monthly utility bill.

“We’re excited to offer this hands-on approach for our patrons to take action in their own lives,” said Rhonda Jessup, CEO of the Whitby Public Library. “We’re always looking for new ways to help our community feel empowered and informed.”



“These Home Energy Tool Kits are an important step in supporting the implementation of Whitby’s Climate Emergency Response Plan,” said Sarah Shields, Manager, Sustainability, and Climate Change, Town of Whitby. “This can be a starting point of a home energy retrofit journey for residents and an opportunity to learn, explore efficiency upgrades, and discover programs like Durham Greener Homes. We’re proud to partner with the Whitby Public Library to provide our community with practical tools that help lower emissions and reduce energy costs.”

The new Home Energy Tool Kits join the library’s growing lineup of Discovery Kits, a collection designed to connect learners and creators with opportunities for exploration.

All kits are free to borrow with a Whitby Library card.

Regional Council approves the 2026 Business Plans and Budget

Durham Region’s 2026 Budget balances delivering quality services with maintaining affordability for residents with a property tax increase of 4.8 per cent. For an average homeowner, Regional property taxes will increase by about \$14 per month where approximately \$10 dollars funds police services and \$4 will be invested in other essential services across the Region including transit, housing, paramedic services and Regional roads and bridges.

We held a Budget Town Hall, conducted a public survey, and invited public feedback to help shape the priorities for this budget – we heard clearly that a focus on affordability and ensuring that essential services continue to evolve and meet demand are important to residents.

The 2026 Budget focuses on keeping costs manageable while still funding the services residents rely on every day –

important services that keep our community safe, connected, and supported.

To guide future planning, the Region will carry out a Core Services Review that will assess existing service delivery, examine service level requirements, and identify opportunities for sustainable efficiencies. The review will also quantify areas where Regional funding exceeds senior-government mandates, helping to inform the Region’s ongoing advocacy for predictable and adequate funding.

Residents are reminded that the Municipal Property Tax Assessment Corporation (MPAC) sets the assessed value for each individual property. Questions about property valuation should be directed to MPAC at 1-866-296-6722 or mpac.ca.

For more information about the Budget visit durham.ca/Budget.

Whitby Launches AI Chatbot on Whitby.ca

The Town of Whitby has launched an artificial intelligence-powered (AI) chatbot, **WhitBEE** (or Whit), on its corporate website, **whitby.ca**. Designed to reflect the Town’s service values and inspired by our Bee City roots – WhitBEE is hardworking, industrious, and buzzing with helpful answers.

Available **24/7**, Whit helps people quickly find information on our website, like permit information, events, and local regulations - reducing the need to search multiple webpages or contact customer service for routine inquiries.

“Whit” supports key objectives and action items in Whitby’s Community Strategic Plan: to deliver exceptional customer service and improve the customer experience through the use of technology.

QUICK FACTS

- A chatbot is a self-service support tool available 24/7 that can answer questions, guide visitors to the right resources, and make finding information faster and easier.
- The WhitBEE chatbot is in its first phase, with ongoing improvements planned.
- The more often residents and staff use WhitBEE, the more accurate responses will become over time.
- Residents can provide feedback on the effectiveness of the chatbot directly in the application.
- The Town is committed to taking a responsible AI approach focused on human oversight, privacy, and continuous improvement. Learn more in the Digital Assistant Disclaimer.

BROOKLIN'S HISTORY

By Jennifer Hudgins

Hockey in the Brooklin of Yesteryear



Long before Brooklin had an indoor arena, hockey found its way into everyday community life. Played on frozen ponds and outdoor rinks, the game was as much about neighbours gathering in winter as it was about competition. Those informal beginnings laid the foundation for the organized teams that emerged when the first Brooklin Memorial arena was built in 1949.

As organized hockey took hold, Brooklin found its footing within Ontario's minor hockey system. Local teams competed under the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA), and their success reflected a town willing to invest time and energy into its youth programs.

The Brooklin Business Men captured the OMHA Bantam D

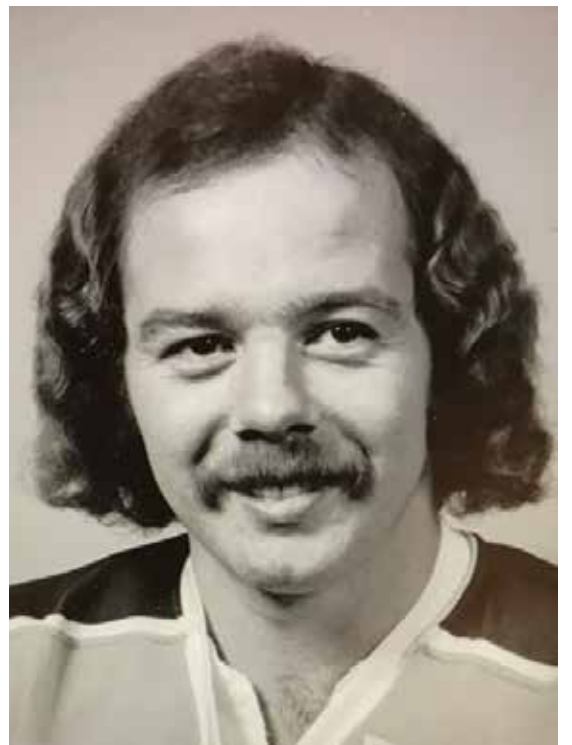
championship in March 1954, a notable milestone as the result signalled Brooklin's rise as a competitive hockey community.

Strong volunteers

Some of this growth was driven by dedicated volunteers and foremost among them was Brooklin resident Clifford Johnston, a long-time minor hockey coach and organizer. For 11 years, he was a central figure in local hockey, coaching and managing several teams at once ranging from peewee (ages 11-12) to junior (ages 17-20). Under his leadership, teams enjoyed repeated success, including peewee championships in 1950-51, OMHA bantam (ages 13-14) and midget (ages 15-16) D titles in 1953-54 and 1954-55, and an OHA Junior D championship in 1955-56. His influence helped to solidify the structure and continuity of minor hockey in Brooklin and Whitby.

He was recognized with his induction into the Whitby Sports Hall of Fame in 2005.

Brooklin's brief but most visible moment on the provincial stage came in the mid-1950s with the Brooklin Cyclones, a junior team that gave the community a taste of high-level competition. Playing in the Ontario Hockey Association, the Cyclones drew strong support. In the 1955-56 season, they captured both the Junior D league championship and the OHA Cup playoffs, earning promotion to Junior C the following year. The team again won its league and advanced to the Clarence Schmalz Cup final, before folding after the 1957-58 season, bringing an end to Brooklin's junior hockey era.



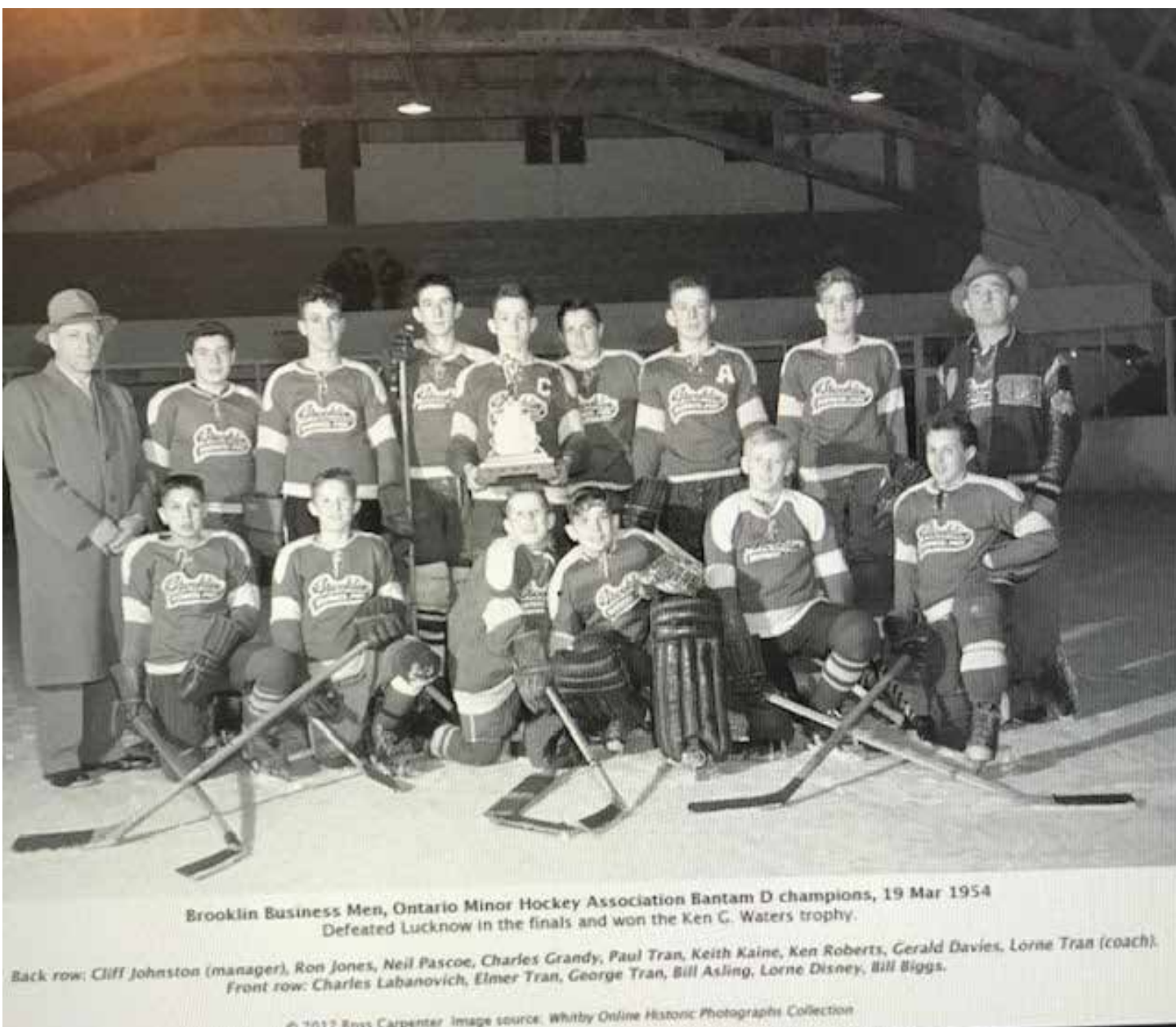
Peter Vipond

The Gretzky appearance

In the decades that followed, hockey in Brooklin increasingly centred on community-based programs. During the 1970-71 season, local teams competed against clubs from across Southern Ontario. Resident Bill Thompson recalled a youth tournament hosted in Brooklin that season featuring a Brantford atom team that included 10-year-old Wayne Gretzky, an account consistent with Gretzky's early minor hockey years.

Brooklin also produced players who went on to broader success. Peter Vipond, who grew up playing minor hockey in Brooklin under the influence of his father, Luther Vipond, a community sports organizer, was one such player. He went on to play junior hockey in Whitby and Oshawa before reaching the National Hockey League with the California Golden Seals, playing a handful of games in the 1972-73 season. He was inducted into the Whitby Sports Hall of Fame in 2003 in the Builder category, recognizing his contributions to sport in the Whitby/Brooklin area. In 1971, Brooklin's hockey future became formally linked with Whitby when the two hockey associations amalgamated under the OMHA.

From frozen ponds to provincial finals, hockey has remained a tradition in Brooklin. That tradition now moves into a new era with the opening of the Fieldgate Sports Complex on Baldwin Street, just south of Highway 407. The new complex will house local hockey and skating programs and replace the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena for ice sports, linking Brooklin's past to its present in a setting built for the next generation.



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Alan Hogan has personally dedicated time to various charitable organizations over the years including; 100 Men of Oshawa, 100 Men of Whitby, local soccer and hockey and was a Director of Public Practice for the Durham CGA chapter

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Region Launches Hate Reporting Program

In response to recent high-profile hate activity, the Region of Durham has partnered with Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR) to launch a Community-Based Hate Reporting Program—the first of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area.

Developed in consultation with human rights and religious

organizations, as well as local community service providers, the program, which is being run by VSDR and offered in multiple languages, consists of an online tool that allows individuals to securely and confidentially report incidents of hate—even those that do not meet the threshold of criminality.

collection, which will help inform future strategies and provide more accurate aggregate data to uncover trends and patterns of behaviour about hate incidents in Durham Region.

Fast facts:

- Hate-motivated crimes/incidents in Durham Region increased by 77 per cent from 2023 to 2024.

Chatham-Kent, and Ottawa, but the program is the first of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area.

The Community-Based Hate Reporting Program builds on the Region's other anti-hate initiatives, including **Together Against Hate Durham**, a three-phased campaign that launched in October 2025. It provides educational tools and resources so municipalities, organizations, institutions, and individuals can take meaningful action against hate in all its forms.

A Community Healing Toolkit is also being created for community leaders and ambassadors throughout Durham Region and offers trauma-informed and culturally affirming guidance for restoring well-being, healing and resilience following a traumatic incident.

For more information about the Community-Based Hate Reporting Program visit victimservicesdurham.ca/antihate.

For more information about the Region of Durham's anti-hate initiatives visit durham.ca/anti-hate.

In addition to reporting, individuals who have experienced acts of hate can access wrap-around services, including immediate crisis response, counselling, practical assistance, and referrals for additional support. The program also accepts both anonymous reporting and witness-submitted reports to enhance data

- This program aligns with the Durham Regional Police Service Hate Crime Unit, offering an alternative for those may not be comfortable, or are unable to report directly to police.

- Research shows hate activity is significantly under-reported. According to Statistics Canada's 2019 General Social Survey, Canadians self-reported over 223,000 hate-motivated incidents in one year, yet only 22 per cent were reported to police. Barriers to reporting include language challenges, fear of retaliation, normalization of hate, and uncertainty about where to report.

- Community-based hate reporting programs have been successfully implemented internationally and locally, including in Hamilton, Waterloo,

February is AMD & Low Vision Awareness Month

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