

Youngsters to be taught to keep ?Heads Up?



Constable Brenda Evans was guiding Grade 5 students Ryan Nguyen and Rachel Hansen through the Heads Up equipment. Photo by Bill Rea

By Bill Rea

A new program was recently introduced aimed at teaching children the skills they need to walk safely near roads and streets.

Called Heads Up, it was launched at Caledon East Public School.

Sponsored by Guild Electric, it helps stress safety by encouraging children to unplug their electronics and keep their heads up.

Students in Caledon schools will have an opportunity to learn important lessons about walking beside busy roads and near traffic as this travelling safety seminar visits elementary schools, beginning in September.

?It's a huge topic,? retired OPP?sergeant Bob Patterson commented at the launch.

Traffic issues, including ones involving busing, have been a topic around the school for some time, according to Principal Heather Denley. It was recently announced that the service will remain in place. ?That was a huge relief for our parents,? she said.

She pointed out having children walking in the area is a concern too, so they have been looking for ways to improve safety.

Inspector Tim Melanson, detachment commander with Caledon OPP, agreed that pedestrian safety is an ?emotionally charged community safety concern.?

He added the three main pillars of the program are education, awareness and enforcement.

He also praised the work of Patterson and Constable Brenda Evans, the detachment's community service officer, commenting they have put their hearts and souls into getting the program going.

?I know it's going to be beneficial to the community,? he said.

?This is such an important day for you,? Mayor Marolyn Morrison told the students who were on hand for the launch.

She also pointed out the three pillars are the same as those used by the RoadWatch program.

?We need to make drivers aware of how they're driving,? she remarked, but also stressed the importance of young people knowing how to safely walk on the sides of roads, and cross in safety too.

?We're all working together to keep the kids safe,? commented Peel District School Board Chair Janet McDougald