

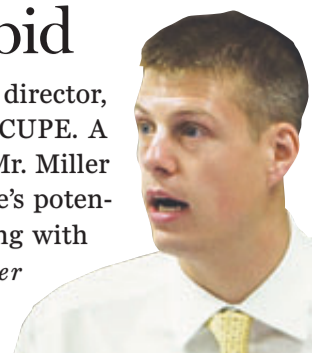
Councillor Giambrone lining up union endorsements for mayoral bid

TTC chairman Adam Giambrone, pictured, is lining up union endorsements for his mayoral bid, which could provide him with key staff thanks to loopholes in city campaign-financing laws. City council this month banned union and corporate donations to mayoralty or council candidates, but left provisions in place that David Miller used to considerable benefit during his successful 2003

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campaign. In that campaign, Mr. Miller staffed five campaign offices across Toronto with employees seconded from unions that supported Mr. Miller. Those employees received a salary from their union, but punched the clock at Mr. Miller's election offices — including Andrea Addario,

Mr. Miller's communications director, who received a salary from CUPE. A source who worked to elect Mr. Miller in 2003 noted Mr. Giambrone's potential union endorsements bring with them the same promise. *Peter Kuitenbrouwer, National Post*



Six months for Vaughan man's anti-Semitic slurs

Father, son faced tirade, death threats

By Kenyon Wallace

A Vaughan man who unleashed a tirade of anti-Semitic slurs and death threats against a Jewish man and his 11-year-old son while they stood in the driveway of their home has been sentenced to six months in custody.

York Regional Police say Matthew Veersasammy, 28, was walking two dogs in the Bathurst Street and Clark Avenue neighbourhood on Sept. 11 when, unprovoked, he began swearing, yelling and directing anti-Semitic invectives against the 43-year-old father and his son, who have not been identified. Veersasammy produced a knife and threatened to kill the father.

The man warned Veersasammy that he would call police, but the anti-Semitic tirade continued.

Police arrested Veersasammy a short time later

after speaking to several residents in the area who were familiar with him.

Veersasammy pleaded guilty to criminal harassment, assault with a weapon and possession of a concealed weapon.

"These types of crimes not only hurt the community that has been targeted, they hurt us all," said police Chief Armand La Barge.

During sentencing last week, Justice Peter Tetley

“These crimes not only hurt the community ... they hurt us all”

took into account victim impact statements given both by the father and a member of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Len Rudner, the Congress's regional director for Ontario, wrote that criminal actions like those perpetrated by Veersasammy, are further magnified when motivated

by bias, prejudice or hate.

"The history of the Jewish people, punctuated most darkly — but not solely — by the Holocaust has shown us that violence motivated by hatred is both pernicious and tenacious," he wrote.

"The rise of Nazism and the ease with which Jews were marginalized within societies in which they lived for centuries also demonstrated that integration into a society is no guarantee of safety. For our community, the lessons of history are not easily forgotten."

Detective Sergeant John Sheldon called the matter an "isolated incident."

"It's not something that happens daily but I can tell you it's not tolerated," Det. Sgt. Sheldon said.

A B'nai Brith audit found the number of anti-Semitic incidents in York Region had increased to 74 in 2008, up from 38 the previous year. In Thornhill there were 55 incidents; Richmond Hill experienced 11; Markham saw five; while in Newmarket there were three.

"In countries like Canada, which has focused a tremendous amount of attention on multiculturalism and diversity, to assault someone because of their multiculturalism is an attack on the wider democratic enterprise," Mr. Rudner said in an interview yesterday.

"Hate crimes are ... an assault not only on the individual and the group from which the victim comes, but on broader society and the values we hold."

National Post
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Volunteers will offer, for donations, free-lunch coupons donors can give to the homeless.

12 DAYS Struggling to bring joy in the face of a cash crunch

Continuing our 12 Days series, Chantaie Allick speaks with Jacqueline LaRonde, founder of Santa in the City. This year, the small charity, which began in 2006, is struggling to keep the spirit of Santa alive in Toronto.

Q Describe what you do in a normal year.

A Normally we help Torontonians bring the magic of Christmas to underprivileged kids and their families in the GTA. We take letters from kids in need, underprivileged kids who write to Santa in a group centre activity. Santa in the City takes them and cleans out the personal and identifying information, posts them online and then we do a giant callout to Torontonians. We don't take money for the gifts. We want to provide an experience for Torontonians so they go out, buy little Tina those Barbies, bring them into us, and we get them to Tina just in time for Christmas so that when

she wakes up the morning of, there's actually something under the tree and for the first time in her life it's exactly what she's asked for.

Q Why are things a little different for you this year?

A The recession kicked us in the snow balls. Unfortunately we just couldn't raise the money needed to fuel those basic necessities of functioning so we weren't able to come back [this year] for our usual service. We've had to spend the year and our usual season trying to fundraise.

Q Do you plan on raising money in the future given what's happened this year?

A Unfortunately a lot of the funds that we raised last year, because the recession hit just before Christmas, ended up having to get reinvested into the season. What should have gone towards admin and keeping us comfortable this year got reinvested into the core service, which is giving gifts to kids. This year our goal is very simple, it's \$15,000 to cover any outstanding [costs] from last year and this year, as well as set us up for a purse in the future so that we won't be shaken by any kind of economic uncertainty again so easily.

Q What's the best way to give to Santa in the City?

A It's a money story for us this year. We're [also] always looking for talented, skilled volunteers. We need every bit of pocket jingle we can raise so that we can come back strong in 2010.

National Post



COURTESY OF JACQUELINE LARONDE

Santa in the City's Jacqueline LaRonde, left, and Margaret Pearson-Lam. The charity helps underprivileged children.

CORRECTION NOTICE

The Acura Advantage Network ad which appears in December 4th National Post, Driving section inadvertently advertised a 4.9% lease rate for 48 months on a new 2010 RDX (Models TB1H2AJN).

The true effective lease rate is 5.9% for 48 months and therefore higher than advertised.

See your Acura Advantage Network retailer or go to: acuragta.ca for complete details and conditions.

We apologize for any inconvenience this omission may have caused.



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Charity offers free-lunch coupons for homeless

'You're not enabling an addiction'

By Rebecca Field Jaeger

Volunteers for a Toronto charity will flood downtown subway stations tomorrow to offer, in exchange for donations, free-lunch coupons donors can give to the homeless.

The event was created to address public skepticism about giving money directly to people who live on the street.

"This way, you know your money is going towards feeding those in need and that you're not enabling an addiction," said Darlene Desveaux, the manager of 6 St. Joseph House in downtown Toronto.

With the help of food donations from Second Harvest, 6 St. Joseph House provides a hot lunch twice weekly to anyone who comes through its door.

Alan Beattie, managing director of Sanctuary, a nearby church that works extensively with people who are homeless, applauds the effort, but cautions that donations of coupons, instead of cash, could be construed as demeaning.

"It could be interpreted, as, 'I don't trust you with my hard-earned money,'" he said. "On the other hand, no one wants to give someone a noose to hang themselves with, which is what giving money to an addict can feel like."

The lunch coupons were conceived two years ago in a different way: they were viewed as a tool to attract potential volunteers, and invited donors to visit 6 St. Joseph House. When a woman refused to donate because she said she would not use the lunch coupon, Ms. Desveaux suggested she give it to a homeless person instead.

"The woman was so taken with the idea she took out her wallet and handed me a \$10 bill," Ms. Desveaux said. "I knew we were on to something."

The House offers several programs to help those facing challenges such as poverty, mental illness and addiction.

With the goal of raising \$15,000, the charity expects to place more than 80 volunteers in nine subway stations, making it their largest campaign to date.

"Our fundraiser is not meant to stop people from giving money to the homeless because the reality is, men and women living on the street need the coins they collect to survive," Ms. Desveaux said. "But we are pleased to provide an alternative way of giving."

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