

Ice hampers search for boy missing in the Grand River



By Brian Lockhart

It has been more than two weeks since three-year-old Kaden Young was swept from his mother's arms into a fast-flowing and swollen Grand River and the young boy has still not been found.

There has been no lack of effort in the search as police emergency response teams as well as private citizens have been on site along the river continually since the accident.

The OPP has had rescuers on site daily since the tragedy happened but are being hampered by large quantities of ice in the river that puts both rescuers and their canine companions at risk.

"We have an emergency response team on the ground today," said Dufferin OPP Constable Paul Nancekivell on Wednesday. "We're going to continue to search until we find him. We have half-a-dozen searchers there today. If we find something we can bring the dogs in and get the helicopter there.

"We're not giving up. We're at the mercy of mother nature in terms of some of the ice flows but that doesn't mean we're not going to bring the dive team back and some of the specialty dogs once the conditions improve. We have planning areas that when the weather cooperates we'll go back and search some more. We're dealing with some huge ice chunks ? up on the shore and some in the river. We're way ahead of what we normally are according to the Grand River Conservation Authority, the melt is far ahead but it's still not where we want it to be."

As the search continues the rescue teams have to be aware of their surroundings and work according to conditions.

"We have to be careful with our own members especially now that we've had some snow over night and a drop in temperatures, the banks are a little icy today," Cst. Nancekivell said. "We're trying to prioritize our resources. There are a few areas that we thought he would be. We put the dive team into the Grand River and Bellwood Lake four or five times where they actually dove under the water in areas where they think he might be. They're the experts in underwater search and rescue."

The search is now focusing on an area near the dam at Bellwood Lake.

The incident occurred in the early morning hours of February 21, on the 10th Line of Amaranth near the village of Waldemar in foggy conditions with water covering the road.

Initial hopes of a rescue faded as the hours went by and the treacherous ice filled river continued to surge. By the end of the day the mission was deemed a recovery effort.

The van the boy had been riding in was located almost two kilometres south of where it entered the river after being carried downstream by the fast flowing current.

Private citizens have also organized with people going out in groups as well as individual efforts to comb the banks of the river to search for Kaden or anything items that might be related to the tragedy.