

# Facebook cultivates strong sense of community among moms

By Julie Slack  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

At least 400 newborns have added to Milton's ever-growing population.

And in this case, there's a good chance these newbies will grow up to be friends thanks, in part, to Shaaron Zach.

The Milton mother of four knew she was expecting in 2016, so she created a Facebook group: Milton Mommies of 2016 Babies.

To be frank, Zach, who's the group's admin-

istrator, said she knew she didn't want to be on her own for the year, and communication with other moms going through the same journey was just the ticket.

By last December, the online group had garnered 230 members, who — like her — were expecting in 2016.

Since then, that number keeps growing, right up until a few days ago (Nov. 1) when the newest baby was born.

This tight-knit community gets together for weekly walks, with some 40 members attend-



The Clarke family pose for a photo during a pumpkin decorating event at Redhill Church.  
Franki Ikeman / Special to the Champion

members have made, Zach explained.

"Many of the members are first-time moms and they've found the answers to questions they might not feel comfortable asking in other groups," she said. "Many of our members are either new to Milton or have never ventured far from home, and so they've had the opportunity to get to know Milton a little more."

Zach said a wine and cheese night, held at her house recently, saw 67 women together — nearly all of whom had not enjoyed a glass of wine in more than nine months.

Zach said members have dubbed themselves the Green Ribbon Gang, because all members have attached a green ribbon on their strollers so they can see each other while they're out and about.

"Literally, anywhere you go, you'll see green ribbons," she said. "I can't even go to Walmart anymore without seeing someone and saying, 'Are you a part of the Green Ribbon Program?'"

Zach said there are members who live right across the street from her, and they're spread across the town.

"It's a real support group with moms in the exact same position as each other; we've got twin moms, moms who've lost babies — just a real cross section of mommies who con-

ing regularly. Playdates happen all over town, as do arranged day trips.

Most recently, Facebook group members met at Marshall's Real Farm in Milton to enjoy a walk around the rural property's pumpkin-shaped corn maze.

They also held a pumpkin decorating family day, when dads and siblings were invited to come out to Redhill Church; Dominoes Pizza donated food, and a local photographer snapped family portraits.

But even more important than the get-togethers are the bonds and friendships the

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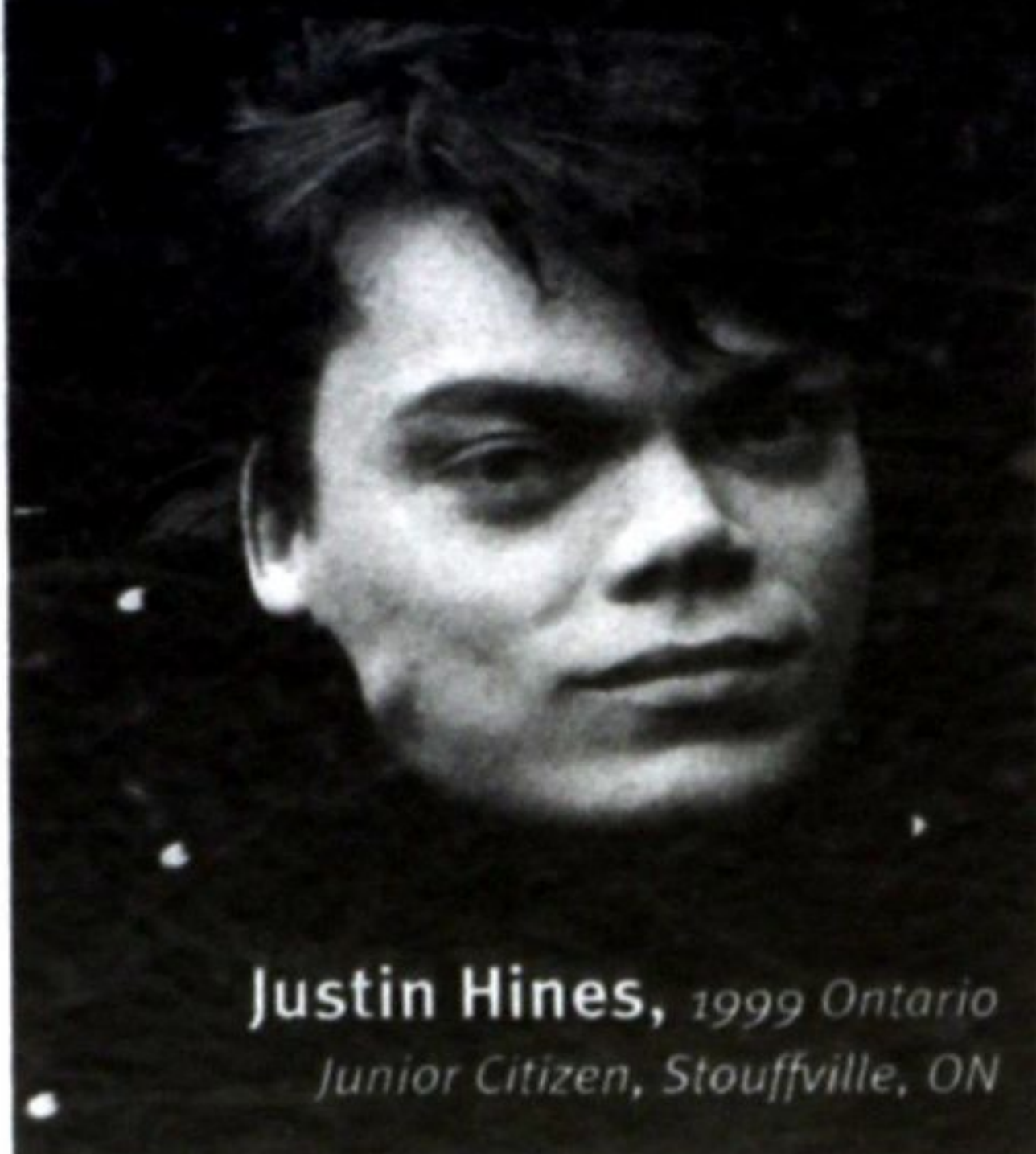
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