Group helps relieve 'twin' stress

By Cheryl-Ann MacKean

Parents who may be experiencing stress while raising twins or triplets may find relief from an association developed just for them.

Durham Region Parents of Multiple Births Association has been supporting parents with twins, triplets and quadruplets since 1979.

The association that once supported 18 families, now helps 250.

The association offers group support meetings that gear towards parenting in general as well as how to cope with children of a multiple birth.

"There tends to be a higher stress level for parents with children from a multiple birth," says Sandi Chandler, president of Whitby's chapter.

The meetings between Chandler and her clients are held at the Micheal Starr building in Oshawa.

"Basically, we help with anything that has to do with kids," says Chandler.

The support group also offers help to parents who are aware during pregnancy of a multiple birth.

Chandler educates the parents on prenatal topics and attends meetings of the Durham Help for Multiple Births.

The association also offers dance support groups for the parents to get together and associate with one another.

"It's a wonderful time to exchange information," says Chandler.

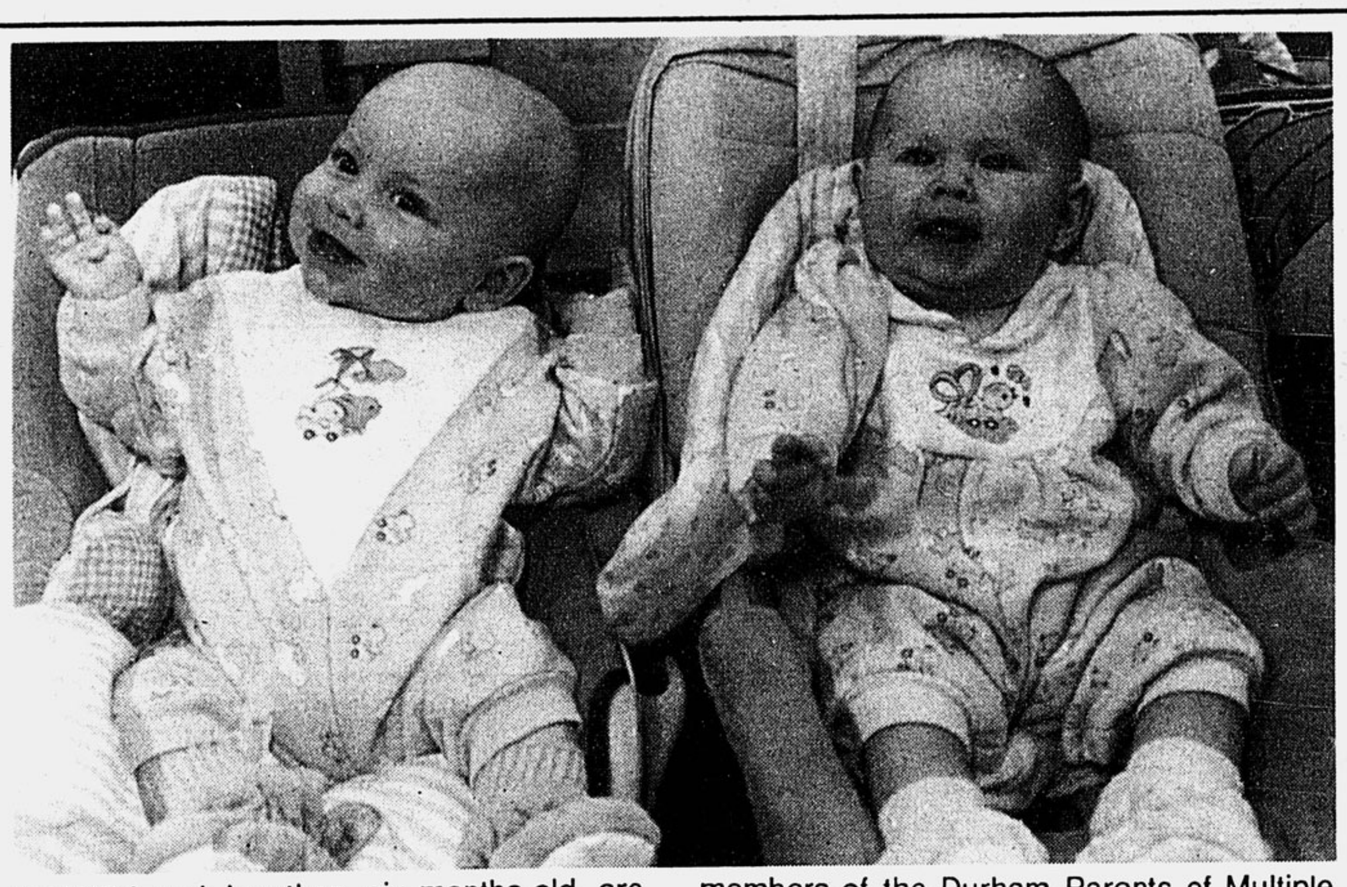
Chandler operates right out of her own residence and her husband helps her by speaking with some of the muliple birth fathers.

Chandler and her husband have one set of twins and three other children.

"Our twins are six, and let me tell you it's a new experience every day," says Chandler.

The association has a library with all kinds of books on kids. Books explain everything from what to expect throughout pregnancy to raising children.

The oldest set of twins involved with the association are aged 12, and one family has quadruplets aged 14.



AMANDA and Jonathan, six months old, are the children of Shawn and Kathy Perry, members of the Durham Parents of Multiple Births Association. Photo by Peter Tomblin, Free Press

In most cases, once the children reach school, the parent's needs for support change.

"It's valuable for me to be able to help out people who are members of the association," says Chandler.

Right now the association has one set of quadruplets, 20 to 23 sets of triplets and the remainder are families with twins.

Funding for the association begins with membership fees that cover the cost of monthly newsletters for the parents.

Also fundraisers such as sales of cheese and cookbooks, and two yearly clothing sales provide money for the association.

"The criteria that we tell people is they have to be a parent or a grandparent of a multiple birth," says Chandler about joining members.

"People find out about the association from pamphlets in doctors' offices and hospitals, and they also contact each other through word of mouth. Participants in Welcome Wagon baby showers also become members of our group."

Social planning is focus of May 13 meeting

A dinner meeting, 'Social Planning for Durham -- The Next Step,' will be held on Thursday, May 13 in Port Perry.

The meeting, held by the Regional Social Planning Steering Committee, is described as "an informed look at three models for social planning/development in Durham Region."

The meeting will be held from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at the Port Perry Community Nursing Home. Cost is $10 per person (includes dinner).

For more information call the Durham Region Community Care Association at 668-6583.

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