

Volunteers help children to become better readers

By Heather McCrae
Port Perry Star

Since January, a new and exciting reading program has been in the works at Cartwright Central Public School. And it's volunteers from the community who are helping make The Primary Reading Club a success.

Last September special education resource teacher Carol Eggleton received a call from Dora Martyn, President of the local Women's Institute, inquiring if there was a need for members of the WI to help students with their reading skills.

"The WI of Ontario has always mandated a literacy program, and we thought it would be worthwhile if we could help students become better readers," said Mrs. Martyn.

With help from Mary Taylor, program director of the Canadian Children's Literacy Association, Mrs. Eggleton designed a program in which volunteers assist children in their reading skills for half an hour, twice a week.

"We presented a full morning workshop to the WI members, but word soon got out and other members of the community enthusiastically joined our reading team," said Mrs. Eggleton. "The Women's Institute started the ball rolling but the excitement oozed out into the community."

The Primary Reading Club has been a success story. Teachers feel the children are becoming more successful with their reading skills, and the WI

and community volunteers feel fulfilled through their participation.

Currently there are 25 students, from Grades 1 to 3, who are sharing special time with over a dozen volunteers.

That one hour's worth of individualized and personalized reading every week has made a positive difference in their reading skills, said Mrs. Eggleton.

"It's an added support some of our students need. Children take pleasure in reading if we read to them and have them read to us regularly," she said. "They quickly discover that books can satisfy part of their sense of curiosity and wonderment."

Mrs. Eggleton, who is also a Reading Teacher Specialist, communicates with all the volunteers about what the needs of the children are and secures motivational reading material which comes from the resource centre, classrooms, "and the homes, trunks and treasure chests of the volunteers".

"One little boy said he didn't like to read when I first began helping him", volunteer Betty Deeth said. "But now he says he loves to read. That really made my day when I knew my efforts had all been made worthwhile."

WI members Dora Martyn and Andrea Weir both enjoy their roles as reading friends.

"It's so much fun, it's sinful," said Mrs. Weir.

"And it's the most wonderful feeling to see the

kids improve with their reading skills," said Mrs. Martyn.

Zachary Grove, a Grade 3 student says, with a big smile, he likes to read more now but also gets to share conversations "about lots of things" with Thelma Wright, his reading friend.

Teachers are getting positive feedback from the parents, too.

"Our program with the community is an original one," said Mrs. Eggleton. "While these kids are getting added support with their reading skills, they will always remember the good times they had with their reading friends, too".

Blackstock Women's Institute

Reading
is
Rewarding!

January 2000

The Blackstock Women's Institute met on Jan. 5 for the first meeting in the new year 2000. Blackstock W.I. was formed in 1915 and has been going every year since then. Quite a record.

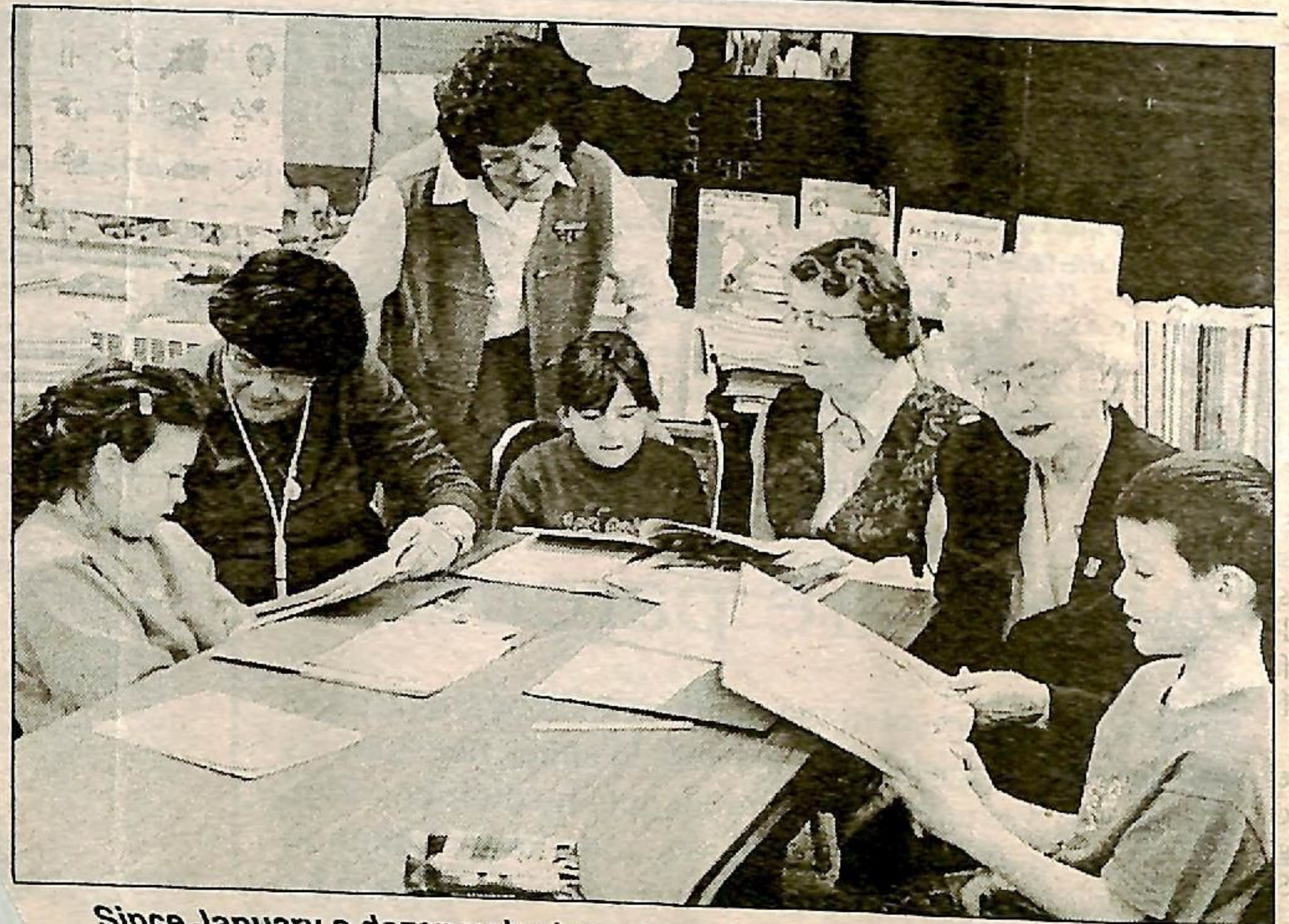
President Dora Martyn opened the meeting in the usual way and lunch was enjoyed by 12 members and two visitors. Erin Lang, a local public school student and her ventriloquist friend Roger entertained us in a humorous tale. Roll call was to name a change you envision for the family in the future and proved very interesting.

Carol Thornton and her group had the program, "Changes in the family over one hundred years." Guest speaker was Sandra Holdsworth, a new member and a local resident, who

told us about the liver transplant she had three years ago in February. As a liver transplant survivor, she is happy to speak for the Transplant Association for which until recently she was National Membership Secretary. In that capacity she has travelled a great deal and stresses the importance of signing our donor cards so our family will know our wishes. The association participates in the world transplant games which are held every two years. Sandra recently returned from Budapest from her first games. Plans are underway for the National Transplant Games which will be held in Sherbrooke, in preparation for the world games in Japan.

by Eileen McLaughlin,
press reporter

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Since January a dozen volunteers have helping children with their reading skills at Cartwright Central Public School. Overseen by teacher Carol Eggleton, in the Primary Reading Club are (L-R) volunteers Andrea Weir with Grade Two student Dana McGeoghan, Dora Martyn with Grade Three student Kimberly Rudkin and Thelma Wright with Grade Three student Zachary Grove.



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