

Maintaining health, goal of nutritionist

Even though Halton is relatively a healthy community, Dr. Peter Cole, Halton's Medical Officer of Health, believes having a nutritionist on staff at the region is a necessity. Such a necessity, in fact, he hired Barbara Engel almost six months ago. Beginning her job a month ago, the nutritionist is acting as a resource person, providing reliable nutritional information to the region among other duties.

Asked why the Ministry of Health could not be used as a resource base rather than paying another staff person, Dr. Cole stated bluntly that that "would not work."

"They have limited resources at the Ministry," he explained, adding the Ministry develops broad nutritional guidelines, and does not use specific communities.

"To provide intensive consultation, you need someone on site," he said.

The Medical Officer of Health said that Engel will be assessing the needs of the community in addition to being a resource person, which is a "fairly substantial chore."

Dr. Cole would not reveal Engel's salary as the nutritionist for the region, saying only that "whatever salary she makes would be on the high scale for a nutritionist."

"But she is highly experienced and is very qualified," he added.

The first thing the nutritionist did when she was hired was rent a television show directed at cooking for the elderly, in cooperation with four other health departments.

"Whether you're 21 years old or 81 years old, the show is relevant because it shows how to eat well on a low budget," Engel



Nutritionist Barbara Engel

explained, adding the fact that the chef on the show is a retired civil servant, making a few blunders adds to the show's informality.

The show, called Senior Chef can be seen Saturday mornings for 13 weeks on Channel 13 (Kitchener) at 10 a.m. It started on June 4, and each show provides two different, nutritious recipes which are easy on the budget.

With a \$1,000 budget at her disposal, Engel is hoping to have Halton residents at "optimal health,"—a goal of every nutritionist.

She believes the nutrition field has grown rapidly in Ontario. "In 1971, there were only seven nutritionists in the public health field and now there are 38 employed in health departments," she said, adding having a nutritionist on staff is important because although Halton is healthy, "we could be

healthier."

One of her priorities will be working with pre-natal public health nurses, aiding them in educating people about pre-natal nutrition. "Parents are a very important source of information, so it's essential these people are taught about good eating habits before they become parents," she said.

Another priority is providing nutritional information to the elderly, an issue Dr. Cole sees as a "major high risk group."

"Even people who are highly educated and have a high income frequently shop and cook poorly," Dr. Cole stated. "This is wrong and needs a whole educational process."

But Engel believes everyone is interested in eating well, but cheaply.

"Even though this is a fairly affluent community, everyone wants to know about low cost nutrition," she said.

Engel graduated with a post graduate diploma in Public Health nutrition from the University of Toronto, after receiving her degree in Home Economics.

"In general, most Canadians are healthy, but it is the diseases of lifestyle which pose the biggest challenge to the health field today," she added.

Engel added that, in a recent survey, 80 per cent of people polled stated they believed nutrition was an important part of their lives.

Stressing she is interested in getting the people of Halton interested in preventative health, she commented that it is essential to have people "take responsibility for their own health."

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Town to help pay for tourism study

Halton Hills is prepared to kick in up to \$1,750, to help the region pay for its planned tourism study.

Last week Halton Hills general committee endorsed a staff report which called for Halton Hills to contribute up to \$1,750 based on a per capita formula as long as all four municipalities in Halton contribute on the same basis.

Also the region would have to reduce the amount of money for the tourism study it is seeking from the municipalities by

obtaining contributions from private business. Private sector funding would reduce Halton Hills contribution from \$1,750.

The whole study would cost about \$60,000 with the province paying \$36,000. The region would put in \$10,000 and the remaining \$14,000 would come from private business, area municipalities and other agencies in Halton.

Clerk-administrator Ken Richardson noted the Town wouldn't have to come up with its share until 1984.

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