

Candystripers celebrate 15 years of service

By LORI TAYLOR
Herald staff writer

For the past 15 years, a group of committed young women has provided nursing care at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital with that extra pair of hands a nurse always needs and can never seem to find.

The Candystripers, a group of young women from the ages of 14 to 19, assist the nurses with the day-to-day tasks which don't require medical knowledge, such as serving meals to the patients, bringing water for flowers, playing with children and running errands for patients.

The organization began in 1964 in Georgetown, and the idea originated with Blanche Goudekting, who realized during a stay in the hospital that a lot of the nurses' time was taken up with the little extras which don't require nursing training. Since Mrs. Goudekting was a member of the women's auxiliary, she proposed to the auxiliary that a group be formed, and she became its first convenor. She started out with about 30 girls in the program.

There are now 45 candystripers in the program, with a waiting list of girls who have submitted applications. Pat Johnson, the convenor in charge of the candystripers, holds training sessions three times a year, with 12 girls per session.

A girl who wants to become a candystriper must be 14 years old, and must submit two letters of reference with her application. Mrs. Johnson has begun a new practice of interviewing prospective candystripers to ensure that they want to become candystripers, and that they aren't applying because their mothers want them to or because they have a friend involved in the program.

If the girl's application is accepted, she then receives training from one of the RNs on the hospital staff, who does this on her own time, Mrs. Johnson said. The nurse will teach the girls the basics of what they need to know, then take them right through the hospital to explain all its functions.

Once a girl is ready to go to work, she is usually scheduled to work with an experienced candystriper if at all possible, Mrs. Johnson said. A full-fledged candystriper wears the familiar red and white striped uniform, while a rookie wears pink and white striped uniform. After five or six weeks, she will get a red and white one.

There are candystripers on duty every day from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and on Saturdays and Sunday, the girls are in from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. as well. During the summer months the candystripers also work from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on weekdays to fill in for the auxiliary's ward workers, who often stay home during the summer, Mrs. Johnson said.

The candystripers have also assisted with such projects as the Smokers' Clinics run by the Halton Lung Association. The girls have also begun to take part in fund-raising drives to raise money to buy new uniforms, Mrs. Johnson said. This is a departure from tradition because in the past, the auxiliary has provided the uniforms.



Candystriper Elizabeth Bird helps serve patients their meals as part of her duties at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital. There are 45 girls in the program, which provides assistance to the nurses in tasks not requiring nursing skills. (Herald photo)

"We like to think of our candystripers as doing the niceties that the overworked staff don't have time to do, like bringing in flowers and changing water," Mrs. Johnson said. "They also help the kitchen staff by taking the dinner trays to the wards and back, and they bring down the menus the patients have filled out for their meals for the next day's meals."

RULES

"Candystripers do have a list of rules and regulations which they must follow," Mrs. Johnson said. "What they hear in the hospital stays here, and doesn't go home with them."

She said she emphasized to the candystripers that participating in the program requires a commitment.

"Candystripping is a commitment which comes first," she said. "It doesn't come after baby-sitting, it doesn't come after boys."

The candystripers at Georgetown Hospital come from as far away as Acton and Erin. Mrs. Johnson said candystripping requires a family commitment as well as a personal one, because most of the candystripers don't drive, and they depend on their families to see that they get to the hospital on time.

Because some of the girls come a long distance to participate in the program, they and Mrs. Johnson particularly appreciate the fact that Georgetown hospital, will provide lunch and dinner for the girls at no cost. Georgetown is in fact one of the few hospitals that still does this, Mrs. Johnson said.

"It's great because a lot of these girls come from some distance away, and they often miss a meal to work at the hospital, so it seems fair that we should try to make up for it when they're giving of their time," Mrs. Johnson said.

"What surprises me is how they become attached to the elderly patients," she added. "There's no generation gap here. The girls talk to them, and sometimes they come in on their own time to visit these people if they think they need some company."

MONTHLY MEETINGS
The candystripers have monthly meetings, except during the summer months, when the girls get together to hear a guest speaker, and also to talk about how things are going.

Region's labor survey to attract new industry

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think our residents like the rural-urban balance we have here."

Mr. Raffis explained that regional council is now ready to consider a new policy which would enable Mr. Marshall's department to begin landbanking for industrial development. More than \$2 million has already been allocated for that purpose in the region's capital budget, he said, although the policy must be accepted by council before any of the money can be spent.

While Peel can claim no publicly-owned industrially-zoned land, according to Mr. Marshall, Halton has immediate access to 40 acres of available land owned by the city of Burlington.

VACANT ACRES
Elsewhere in Halton, however, there are some 7,000 acres of privately-owned vacant, industrial land awaiting new occupants. Heather Reynolds-Pew of the region staff estimated that 1,400 acres of that land are serviced for industry.

Halton Hills, Mr. Marshall conceded, is the "exception" in the region when it comes to available industrial land. The town is "unable to live up to its potential" in terms of industrial development, he said.

Ms. Reynolds-Pew told The Herald that Halton Hills offers some 264 acres of industrial

land sitting vacant and ready, with 92 acres in Georgetown and 172 in Acton. Of that amount, 117 acres are already serviced, she said.

By comparison, Burlington offers 2,750 acres of industrial land, Oakville 2,550 acres and Milton 1,725 acres. In Milton's case, some 1,500 acres are contained within the town's recently-approved industrial park on its common border with Halton Hills.

Asked where regional council would prefer to see landbanking efforts focussed, Mr. Raffis answered simply "where it would do the most good". Private land will be purchased, if the policy is approved, in accordance with the type of industry in question and the proven need in any given municipality, he said.

JOB ADVANTAGE
Both Mr. Raffis and Mr. Marshall agreed that the provision of jobs is the bigger advantage to business development in Halton. The region's 75-25 assessment ratio of resi-

dential to industrial, he explained, would require extensive changes in the industrial picture - another \$40 million worth of new industrial assessment - if homeowners are to feel any benefit, he said.

"I think it's one of the greatest benefits we can provide to offer more jobs closer to home," Mr. Marshall commented.

Other aspects of the region's Economic Staging plan include the analysis of community strengths and weaknesses, the identification of potential growth areas, the availability of business support, housing and transportation services and the need for additional lands.

To be circulated around Halton during the next week, the labor survey was designed by the region's Statistics and Transportation division in conjunction with the consulting firm of Woods, Gordon and Company.

According to Mr. Marshall, the survey "reflects the key economic objectives of the

region's official plan, particularly in its "place of employment" objectives. A comprehensive transportation survey conducted by the region last year indicated that more than 55 per cent of Halton's employed residents travel outside the region to their jobs.

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"I try to find out if there are any problems," Mrs. Johnson said. "My job is to be a sounding board, so there aren't any problems."

"What people don't realize is that none of these girls know each other very well when they start out in the program," Mrs. Johnson said. "It's really a fun thing when they get together."

Patients express their appreciation to the candystripers in various ways, Mrs. Johnson said, but the candystripers are not allowed to accept gratuities. In most cases, the patient will buy a box of candy and leave it to be shared by the girls, she said.

The girls receive other forms of recognition for their work. Volunteers who have worked 50 hours receive a cap, while volunteers who have worked 100 hours receive a st. After 200 hours, the candystriper is given a pin, and after 400 hours of service,

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she receives a hat.
The oldest girl involved in the program at present is 19, Mrs. Johnson said. If an 18-year-old applies to enter the program for the first time, Mrs. Johnson said she refers her to the auxiliary, because she is old enough to become a member.

Mrs. Johnson has been involved with the candystripers' program for three years, and has since given up her other duties with the auxiliary be-

cause "this is a full-time job. It's an enormous job when you have 45 teens to look after," she said.

The candystriper program give something to the girls, to Mrs. Johnson said. The girls learn a lot and they learn to deal with people outside their families.

"I think my girls are the best in Georgetown because they are committed, and they give their time unselfishly," she said.

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