

Film on centre for handicapped will make rounds

Local service club members and other interested parties will also be able to view a 15-minute show on the progress of work of the Halton Developmental Centre for the severely mentally handicapped, produced this year to encourage more Halton residents to sign on as volunteers.

"Just Me and My Friends" is a sound and slide show prepared by members of the North Halton, Burlington and Oakville associations for the mentally retarded. Previewed for the press last week, it will make the rounds of various organizations and agencies throughout Halton beginning next month.

"We're trying to stimulate some interest in the Centre's volunteer program," Oakville regional Coun. Ron Pancher, a member of the Oakville association, explained.

Located in Milton, the Halton Developmental Centre teaches basic motor and communicative skills to severely handicapped youngsters and young adults, some of whom are coping with physical disabilities.

While some students at the Centre may eventually go into the specially-designed Arc Industries workshops for the mentally handicapped, most have made remarkable progress if they can dress properly or tie their shoes by the time they are 18.

Centre director Dennis Tessier explained that 10 years ago, such severely handicapped children would have been lost in any institution. Parents, however, demanded that their children, regardless of handicaps, have the right to a proper education.

Established in 1976, the centre has 23 students, and about seven full-time, specially trained instructors. It functions entirely on a \$200,016 budget from the provincial ministry of community and social services.

Nevertheless, the directors of Halton's three associations for the mentally retarded, Oakville's Bert Bergerink, North Halton's David Williams and Burlington's Otto Ahlers, agreed that volunteers working together in the centre's staff would maintain the high quality of instruction without overburdening provincial assistance.

"The growing process between the instructor and the student is very much on a one-to-one basis," Mr. Tessier said. "It doesn't require a great deal of special training. Almost anyone could do it with the help of the staff."

Mr. Tessier said that the centre now has four or five volunteers assisting with the students' daily schedule of instructive and recreational events, adding that the slide show idea to attract volunteers.

Doneness
Sticking a fork into meat to test for doneness is not a good idea. NCSU extension home economists point out that it releases juices and causes the meat to dry out.

is the "first time we have done something like this on this scale".

Special programs, he said, take the students out to shopping malls, parks and zoos, which not only help the mentally handicapped cope with the public, but also help the public get used to them.

Mr. Bergerink said that parents as well as the instructors have the responsibility of making sure that new skills learned during the day are practised in the home at night.

Its demanding volunteer work, sometimes the rewards are few and a long time in coming. But, as the slide show's accompanying commentary says, the job is important and it does present some real challenges.

Bob Plancher's photographic diary of life at the centre, as well as a compelling text narrated by CFRB's Wayne Van Esau, presents an insight into a world largely unfamiliar to the average family.

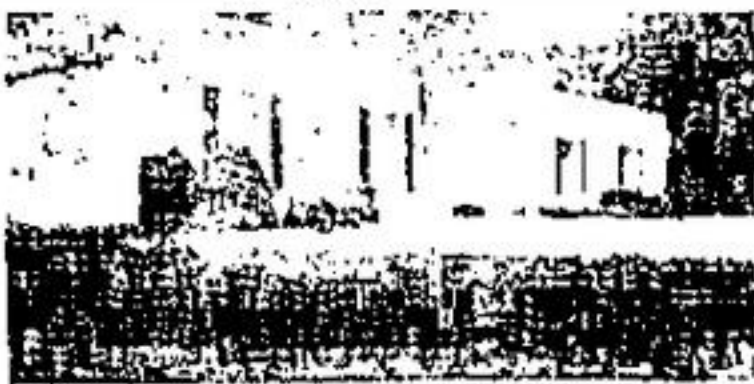
When "Just Me and My Friends" is presented to Halton service clubs later next month, it should arouse a good deal of positive interest.

Find out about the show's availability by phoning Lynne Bull at the Centre, 878-4129.



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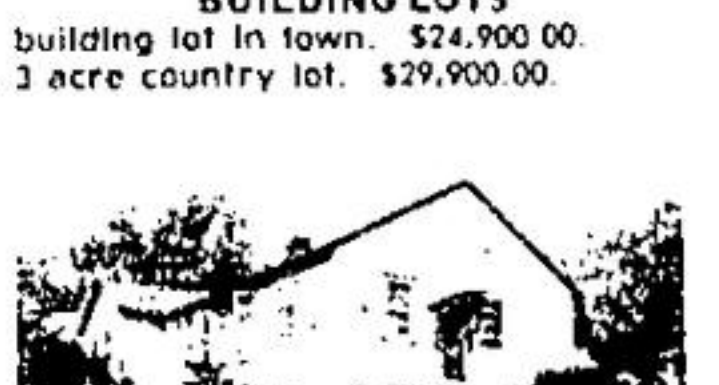
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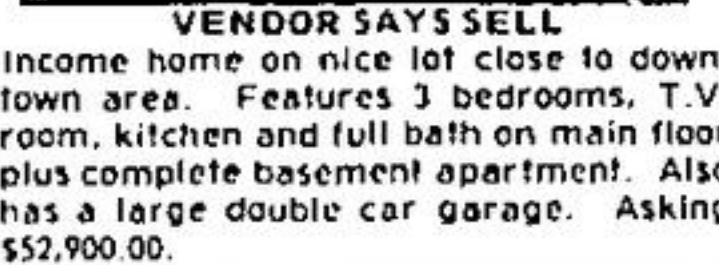
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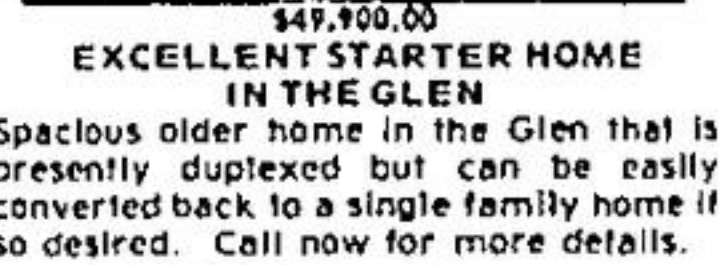
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