

**Norval resident is HWP counsellor**

# Maria McNulty helps region's abused women

By ASTRA PAPE  
Herald Staff Writer

The house is like any number of others on the quiet back street in Milton. Larger than your average family home, it stands two and a half storeys high. The exterior is well-kept and pleasing to the eye. On a warm summer day one can hear children playing in the backyard as they are apt to do anywhere.

Yet despite outward appearances, this house is different. It houses not a family, but many women and their children who have come to this house seeking shelter from a turbulent domestic life that not only includes repeated ugly scenes and arguments but incidences of abuse as well.

It's no accident that centres for battered women and their children are cropping up all over Canada. For many years, the problem of battered wives has been largely overlooked and only recently has it come into the open. The women are no longer seen as participants in an unfortunate domestic spat but as victims of assault.

As part of this increasing trend toward violence in the home, women's centres have been opening up to aid the women who have been beaten by their husbands. They are designed to help the women deal with situations they often thought they'd never have to face and coping on their own. The centres also offer a haven when there is no place else to turn to at 2 in the morning.

Only recently has this type of shelter been established in the region of Halton. The Halton

Women's Place in Milton opened in October 1980 and has already helped many women in the Halton region.

The shelter is a product of many years of study and discussion. A committee was formed three years ago to establish if there was a need for a shelter for Halton. The results of the study showed conclusively that there was and efforts were made

immediately to form a shelter. A house was located in Milton that suited the centre's purpose and after extensive renovating and decorating, the centre opened.

The centre can provide accommodation for up to 18 women and children. Facilities include a kitchen, living room, dining room, TV room, a play room for the children and a

laundry room. The women are responsible for their own meals and doing their laundry.

Yet the aim of the centre is not simply to provide a place to stay for the women but to also offer assistance in regaining a foothold in society and perhaps to provide counselling to help them reconcile with their spouses.

As part of their services, the centre's counsellors ascertain each woman's physical and emotional needs when she comes to the centre. If she has been severely beaten, they will contact a doctor or the hospital. They also help the woman get financial assistance, day care for her children or legal aid if she needs it. The centre has a close liaison with Canada Manpower and Sheridan College's Centre for Women so the woman can either upgrade her skills or get help in finding a job.

The counsellors are always on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week to guide the women and answer any of the questions they may have.

Maria McNulty is one of the five counsellors who has worked at the centre since October. A long-time Norval resident, Miss McNulty says that she has always been concerned with domestic violence. She said that it's a problem that knows no racial, social or age barriers.

"We've had all kinds of women in here, from the age of 16 right through to 77," Miss McNulty explained in an interview with The Herald Monday. The children they bring with them can be only a few weeks old or in their mid-teens.

Miss McNulty is a graduate of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo with an Honors Bachelor of Arts in psychology. She developed an interest in this type of work while working on a part-time basis during university and on summer jobs. Her list of previous jobs, whether they involved working as a volunteer or not, is impressive.

She has worked on a part-time basis at Lutherwood, a centre for treating emotionally disturbed adolescents in Waterloo. She didn't actually counsel any of the adolescents but supervised them and organized recreational activities.

She first became involved in the area of battered wives when she served on the committee that looked into the feasibility of establishing a women's centre in the Halton region. As part of that committee, she not only obtained an approximate count of how many women are abused in Halton, but gauged community support for such a centre and made recommendations on the most suitable type of and location for the centre.

With her interest in the women's centre heightened, she now conducted research at Anselma House, a shelter for abused women and their children in Kitchener, for a fourth year thesis. As part of her research, she worked at the house, receiving the women when they first arrived, counselling them and working on the crisis line.

The next two years she worked at the Elizabeth Fry Society in Brampton, a half-

way house for women who had spent time in a penal institution. Her duties were many and varied. She helped the women with job referrals, helped the women in the Vander Centre maintain a link

with the community and provided counselling. She also assisted them with the biggest step they'd have to make, re-integrating back into the community.

It was during the time she spent working at the Elizabeth Fry Society, that Miss McNulty first came into contact with Loretta Costigane, who is now executive director of the Halton Women's Centre. With the concrete plans for a centre, Miss McNulty applied to work as a counsellor there.

Once the centre opened in October, Miss McNulty was one of five counsellors who received the first guests. Here she has the most comprehensive job yet, providing counselling for the women when they first arrive, promoting the awareness of domestic violence, planning and implementing services and convening resident meetings.

The resident meetings are arranged so the women can get together and discuss with each other their experiences and feelings. Miss McNulty has also organized ex-residents' meetings. Women who formerly stayed at the centre come back once a month and discuss with each other how they are managing. Residents of the centre also join to learn more about what the future holds for them.

Miss McNulty also mans the

telephone crisis line providing counselling for women who need someone to talk to. Often the women talk with a counsellor over a fairly lengthy period of time before they finally make the decision to leave and move into the centre.

Halton Women's Place has fulfilled a very definite need in the Halton region. Since October, 113 women and 129 children have sought out the centre.

In one month alone, the crisis line handled 64 calls. Miss McNulty pointed out that the women have come from all over the Halton region and they've had referrals from Toronto, Mississauga, Orangeville and Campbellville.

It's a very big job and the five counsellors are grateful for the help they receive from the team of volunteers. Six volunteers work in the centre helping out with counselling while approximately 15 others are on call almost all the time and are ready to drive the women to an appointment or to pick them up from their homes.

Halton region has agreed to pick up 60 per cent of the centre's operating costs. The region pays \$17.50 of the \$22 it costs each woman per day.

Miss McNulty added though that the centre is always receptive to any private contribution and welcomes donations of clothing, small appliances or food.

She added that she enjoys working with the women because she has a real interest in their problems. Miss McNulty finds it a challenge to help a woman get back on her feet again and even reconcile

their differences with their husbands although this rarely occurs.

Miss McNulty said she hopes to pursue her education, further and study more about social work. She added that the centre does encourage its

counsellors to attend seminars in order to remain up-to-date on new techniques in their field.

As long as the counsellors and the centre are there, she'll have someone she can turn to for help.

## Business thefts may be related

Four Armstrong Avenue businesses in Georgetown were broken into late Wednesday evening or early Thursday morning in what Halton Regional police say appear to be related incidents.

Thieves broke into Unilock Limited at 287 Armstrong Ave. by smashing a window. They ransacked the offices causing an estimated \$100 damage and stole an unknown amount of money from a cash box.

T.D. Williamson Limited at 102 Armstrong Ave. was also entered through a window. Approximately \$70 in damage was done to the business and \$35 in coupons was taken.

Curwood Packaging Limited at 114 Armstrong Ave. was broken into by cutting a screen over the window. No estimate of the damage has been reported and \$173 was taken.

The fourth business, Hayes Dana Inc. at 120 Armstrong Avenue, was also entered through a screen window. No damage was done but \$30 was taken. Halton Regional police suspect that juveniles are involved in the break-ins.

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Maria McNulty is one of five counsellors working at the Halton Women's Place in Milton. The centre, which opened in October, offers shelter for abused women and their children. The counsellors aid the women in finding work, new skills, legal and financial aid and help them cope with their problems through personal counselling and group workshops. (Herald photo)



**THE CATERPILLAR KIDS**

Coach Cheryl Thompson of the Recreation department's gymnastics camp had her girls finely tuned for a performance last Friday for parents at Cedarvale Park. This caterpillar-like train includes (left to right) Sarah Fenske, Diane Graville, Lindsey Smith, Nancy Reid, Christy Lighthower, Allison Munro, Andrea Crosby. (Herald photo)

## Rec department swim changes

The Learn To Swim program offered by the Town of Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department is the Canadian Red Cross Water Safety Program, however the program levels have changed.

The old Red Cross program was developed in 1946 and since that time, the needs of the individuals using the programs have changed. As a result, the Red Cross has totally changed their swim program levels as we have known them. The "New" Water Safety program level names and the order in which they will be taught, from non-swimmer to advanced swimmer, will be: yellow, orange, red, maroon, blue, green, grey and white.

The new program has several advantages:

- A) It is easier to understand the purpose and sequence of the items, as they are now categorized into four major areas:
  - 1) Safety Education
  - 2) Safety Skills
  - 3) Movement Skills
  - 4) Continuous Activity
- B) The Safety Education content is defined in specific terms so that:
  - 1) the Instructor will know exactly the Water Safety content to teach at each level.
  - 2) The Personal Assistants and Rescue Breathing areas

are placed in a better learning sequence.

C) Strokes are introduced at a rate of one stroke per level. This alleviates the problem of having to introduce and teach 2 or 3 different strokes in one set of lessons.

D) When a stroke (except side stroke), is first introduced the maximum distance required at that level is 25m. This quality rather than endurance can be emphasized.

E) Although all strokes must be learned, the candidates have a choice of strokes to perform during the Continuous Activity.

F) Cold Water Survival and H.E.L.P. are recognized as important additions in the continuum.

G) There is an increased emphasis on rhythmic breathing as an important safety skill for gaining confidence, as well as a preliminary skill for learning front crawl and breast stroke.

H) Continuous Evaluation is recognized as the best form of evaluating the participant, realizing that individuals progress at different rates. A belief in Continuous Evaluation will help us eliminate the concept of failing and recognize the individual nature of the participant.

I) There are only 2 evaluation standards, Initial Stan-

dard and Advanced Standard.

In order to help you transfer your child into the new program, we have developed an equivalency chart.

COMPLETED	ENTER
Novice	Yellow
Pre-beginner	Orange
Beginner	Maroon
Survival	Maroon
Junior	Blue
Intermediate	Grey
Senior	White

If you have any questions on the above, we ask that you call the pools in the evenings between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. - Action Indoor Pool 853-3140, Georgetown Indoor Pool 877-7721 - or call G. Campbell at the Recreation Office, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 877-5165, ext. 61.

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## Halton Police announce promotions

# Ex-Georgetown cop keeps movin' on up

Continued from page A3

Keith Robertson has been promoted from sergeant to staff sergeant and transferred from the criminal investigation unit in district one (North Halton) to the uniform division in district two (Oakville).

A police officer since 1960 when he began his career with the Milton force, he has served the Halton police department at the north Halton criminal investigation bureau for six years.



SGT. BRUCE RICHARDS

Sergeant Bruce Richards began his police career in Georgetown in 1971. He had served at the criminal investigation unit in district one since 1975.



STAFF SGT. KEITH ROBERTSON

Meanwhile, a former Georgetown police constable has been promoted to sergeant, moving from the criminal investigation unit in district one to Oakville's uniform division.

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HEATHER LOYERHOVE 78 Mary St. Georgetown	KIM DELLAUW 290 Arthur St. Acton	JIMMY BITTES 88 Mary St. Georgetown

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