

## Acton residents help at North York children's centre

## Parenting can be a lonely task

By MAGGIE HANNAH  
Herald Special  
Parenting isn't just quite as easy or instinctive as people are sometimes lead to believe and giving parents a chance to compare notes as well as learn a few tricks can make it easier, according to a family therapist.

Bruce Brillinger, an Acton resident who works at the DeLester Children's Centre in North York, sees parenting as one of life's loneliest jobs.

Seven or eight years ago, Mr. Brillinger and his wife found that even with their extensive experience with children, he, as a family therapist, and she, as a high school teacher, were groping in the dark trying to raise their own four children - until they discovered parent effectiveness training (PET) which they now teach.

"We were flying by the seat of our pants," he said. "There were no guidelines and no people to talk to who could tell you what you were doing was right."

Most recently Mr. Brillinger ran a week-long family camp at Five Oaks Centre near Brantford where whole families could spend a week learning communication skills and putting them into practise at the camp.

Mr. Brillinger said this is the second year for the camp. Ten families from across Ontario participated including three single-parent families.

Large portions of the day were left open for families to carry on their own activities. Each evening after campfire,

the parents had a two-hour training session in skills drawn from parent effectiveness training. These included communication skills so parents listened to their children and got them to talk.

Parents were also taught how to talk to the children so that the children listened and problem solving so that areas of conflict could be worked out and still leave everyone feeling good about their relationships with each other.

Parents also learned how to influence children to adopt the parent's values.

In the morning after breakfast the families, broken into two groups with a pair of leaders in each group, began tasks as a family which gave the parents the opportunity to practise the skills they had been taught the previous evening.

Part way through the morning the children, ranging in age from three to 16 split off into groups of their own. The 13 youngsters under 10 played various games with teenage leaders while the 10 older children evaluated what they had experienced in their family groups that morning.

One of the interesting topics he found the youngsters bringing up on their own during the last days of the camp was that things would change when they got home and returned to normal routines.

The families were encouraged to sit down and work out a plan for making some of the changes they felt would be beneficial to their lifestyles before they left the camp.

The camp, which Mr. Brillinger feels is unique in Ontario and possibly in Canada, was special because the entire family was present where leaders could not only teach the skills but observe the parents' attempts to use their new knowledge.

A telephone call 12 weeks after last year's camp to determine how the training was working told Mr. Brillinger that a lot of the skills he had taught had been forgotten. However, the positive feeling that the children weren't any worse than those of other

people remained to reassure the parents.

Mr. Brillinger said the camp was aimed at enriching family relationship but a spinoff seemed to be an enrichment of marriages as couples got closer together learning to think in terms of "I Must Do" rather than "You Must" and also changing "They Must" to "We Should".

The fact that single parents attended the camps both years was also special, Mr. Brillinger said. Society tends to segregate two-parent and single-parent families and it is

often difficult for the single parent to see his children in a comparable setting with children from two-parent families.

Single parents found many times their children were acting in more acceptable patterns than those who had two parents to guide them. If

they had qualms that splitting up would ruin their children, the camp showed them their decision had probably been the right one and their children had survived it after all.

Another man who had been worried over what would

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## KINETTE CLOTHIERS

Neither rain, nor sleet, nor hail, nor snow could keep the Georgetown Kinettes from holding their annual flea market and bake sale at the A and P parking lot Saturday. Proving that they have no hang ups about posing for a Herald photographer are Kinettes Ritchie Hogan, Cheryl Crawford, Nancy Webster and Sheryl Savage. Money raised from the flea market will be used to fund various Kinette projects in town while proceeds from the club's coinciding bake sale will be enjoyed by the Ontario Society for Crippled Children.

Charlie Farquharson (actor Don Harron) and opera singer Maureen Forrester are among the many Canadians who have brought financial aid and moral support to elderly citizens of the Third World through the Adopt-a-Gran program. Well-known personalities like Ed Broadbent, Joe Clark, Pierre Trudeau and Emmett Cardinal Carter have endorsed the international campaign along with American celebrities Don Knotts and Helen Hayes and British notables Malcolm Muggeridge, Sir Alec Guinness and Sir Ralph Richardson. For \$12 a month, Canadians can provide a lonely, pensionless senior citizen abroad with supplementary food, clothing and medical attention. Write Adopt-a-Gran care of Help for the Aged, 44 Eglinton Ave. West, Suite 311A, Toronto, M4R 1A1, or phone 489-1146.

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## IN THE CHURCHES

By Bob Ollivier

## Beginnings...

September is traditionally the month of new beginnings in our churches. After summer vacations (resulting in low attendance in some Churches anyway), an effort is being made to get back to normal.

Sunday school should be an integral part of every child's learning experience, in order to make a well-rounded personality.

Adults should set an example by attending themselves, and the family staying for church. Learning about your religion is vital to your understanding of it, and should lead to more participation on your behalf.

The well known TV program "100 Huntley Street" is holding two rallies: Oct. 16 in Mohawk College auditorium in Hamilton and Thursday Oct. 15 at John F. Rosa Collegiate in Guelph.

Both start at 7:30 p.m. but a fellowship time and sing will begin at 8:30 p.m. Rev. Gordon Williams will be sharing the Word of God, and the Trio will sing at each program.

The Credit Valley Conservation Authority own the White Church in Caledon and hold Thanksgiving services there each fall. This year the date is Oct. 11 at 2:20 p.m. Organist John Lane of Tweedsmuir Presbyterian Church will lead the congregation, and Rev. Hugh McDonald of Caledon East Presbyterian Church will conduct the service. A social hour will follow. The White Church is located on the fourth line west in Caledon about three miles south of Belfountain.

Two other recent additions to our local Churches are Mar. Vinet at Sacre Coeur and Rev. Jim Boyles at St. Georges Anglican. Welcome to Georgetown, and trust you will have a fruitful ministry.

The concert last Friday with the co-operation of the Georgetown Alliance and Halton Gospel Temple was well attended. Peritta Lim has sung for Billy Graham among others and is an accomplished soloist. Notice of concerts, etc. in Halton Hills would be appreciated for this column.

The Georgetown Christian and Missionary Alliance Church has released plans for a program under the name of Let Us Arise And Build. The program will run approximately three years with the ultimate goal of the purchase of land and the construction of a new church building.

The Book of Proverbs tells "Where there is no vision, the People perish", and the Alliance Church has the vision, and a full church.

The theme of the program is "Not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice". Next Sunday evening members and friends will attend a banquet at the Georgetown golf and Country Club to inaugurate the program.

Maple Avenue Baptist Church holds a Women's Coffee hour each Friday at 9:30 until 11 a.m. Child care is provided at this informal meeting.

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