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## SECTION

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### Fairy tale floats on Acton's Mill St.



This boy may seem too small for the axe he holds, but no one disputed his bull-of-the-woods status Saturday - certainly not during a parade with a fairy tale theme. Both he and the wolf were part of Speyside Public School's fairy tale float. (Herald photo)



Santa had much to Ho Ho Ho about Saturday as the Acton parade in his honor was a success. Eight to ten new attractions joined the parade in the last ten days to bring the total to 24. The weather was cold and the skies were clear; it was beginning to feel a lot like Christmas. (Herald photo)



Children were well represented in the parade. This float from the Acton Co-op Nursery is overflowing with children. The sidewalks were also lined with many more eager little faces patiently waiting for Santa Claus. (Herald photo)



Speyside Public School entered a float loaded with characters from Fairy Tales. Practising his Momma Bear impersonations before the parade, is a student from the school. (Herald photo)



Cinderella and her prince were part of the Speyside Public School float. Cinderella's fairy godmother earned a spot between them. Don't they remind you of another royal couple? (Herald photo)



This trombone player of Acton's Citizen Band showed his Christmas spirit in more ways than one. He played Christmas carols with the band with a red sock on his slide trombone. Gloves and mittens were needed to play. (Herald photo)



Children were told it was OK to take candy from these strange ones. The clown on the left claimed the other was his wife. (Herald photo)



Fall Fair Princesses Nancy Norton (left) and Maria Kril were favorites with the children, especially when they started throwing candy to spectators. There was no shortage of candy Saturday. (Herald photo)

## Shared Care helps Farragher family cope

By KAREN HEWER  
Herald Special  
Most parents of handicapped children struggle endlessly with decisions about how to care for their child - keep them at home, or place them in an institution. The former can plunge the family into almost certain turmoil, as they try to cope; the latter impose unbearable guilt.  
Nick and Stevie Farragher wrestled with these questions for several years, attempting to balance the needs of their developmentally handicapped son, Hugo, aged six, and their other children, Oscar aged eight, and Brodie aged three.  
This year, an alternative presented itself which freed the Farraghers from facing the extremes involved in either straight home care or institutionalization. Called "Shared Care", this innovative program offers a creative solution to that bleak choice.  
The pilot project is operated under the Halton Home Care for Mentally Handicapped Children Program, and involves the natural parents caring a larger percentage of the time in any one month than will the foster family. The natural parents retain

complete custody of the child, and continue to provide and pay for all expenses. The goal of the project is to support and strengthen the parent-child relationship by providing a break from the heavy demands of parenting a handicapped child.  
The Farraghers have no reservations about the success of shared parenting, its benefits for their son, and for themselves.  
"We reached the point where we felt we didn't want to deal with Hugo's special demands day after day," Mrs. Farragher explained. They first looked around at residential placements a couple of years ago. Oaklands, a residential program for the handicapped is only available to those children six years and older, and Hugo, at that time was too young.  
The Farraghers, also, were not convinced that excluding their son from normal family life would be helpful for him. In 1983 they went to the Oakville Volunteer Bureau to advertise in the local paper for part-time parent relief. For the Farraghers, the help of a North Oakville family, that resulted started the shared parenting ball rolling.

In 1984 they again sought the help of the Volunteer Bureau and Jane Luyks responded by taking Hugo one weekend per month. Jane and her family now share parenting responsibilities with the Farraghers, by taking Hugo into their home 14 days per month.  
"There's the sense of failing as a parent at first," admitted Mr. Farragher, "but not now...we know Hugo's in a better situation than before. It's good for Hugo and it's good for our relationship with him."  
Hugo's father added that, "we've learned to see Hugo as society's child, not just our own. Possessiveness would not be helpful to his growth and development. We feel we've been fortunate. Jane is a marvellous person."  
The couple noted that their older son, Oscar, has felt a lot of pressure in caring for Hugo, and the shared parenting program provides a break for the whole family.  
"There is an undeniable freedom when Hugo is with Jane - we can now go for a walk in the evening, a bike ride, ski, something we've longed for for six years," said Mrs. Farragher.

She explained that in the past, outings with the entire family were difficult. Hugo was unable to walk, and "a stroller isn't the easiest thing to maneuver along the Bruce trail."  
Hugo's capabilities have improved somewhat, however, since Jane Luyks got involved with him. The tall, slim widow, stated emphatically that he would walk at her home, as she was unable to carry him. He now uses a walker, or walks by holding onto another's hands. The independence Jane instills in Hugo, is one of the things the Farraghers like so well about her.  
A former nurse, Mrs. Luyks has volunteered with the mentally retarded, and worked as a homemaker with the Red Cross.  
The Farragher family are participating in a new program offered by the Halton Children's Aid called "Shared Care". Seen here clockwise from left are: Stevie Farragher, son Oscar, 8, Nick Farragher, Hugo's foster mother Jane Luyks, Hugo, Farragher, 6, and Brodie Farragher, 3. (Photo submitted)

