Five-year-old Sarah Markus and Cameron Finnis, also 5, pose with puppets Mark Riley and Melody. The puppets were part of the Kids on the Block display at the Open House. The puppets help familiarize young and old alike about different disabilities. The north Halton group

will be holding some skits Tuesday Mar. II at the Knox Presbyterian Church in Acton as part of the Recreation and Parks Department's Activity Week during March Break. The puppeteers are Benny McLeod (Melody) and Cathy Hawkins (Mark), (Herald photo)

Special 'kids' make their puppet debut

The North Halton chapter of Kids on the Block will be making its debut in Acton during the March Break.

Kids on the Block Is an organization that educates people towards understanding and accepting the disabled by means of puppetry. The puppets used are about three feet tall, wear regular children's clothing and portray varying disabilities such as blindness, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, spina blfida, retardation, diabetes as well as drug abuse and teenage pregnan-

Kids on the Block will be presented as part of the Recreation and Parks Department's Activity Weel: during the March break. The puppets will be presented Tuesday Mar. 11 at Knox Presbyterian Church in Acton. Cost will be \$30 for the whole week of activities or \$7 per child per day.

The program originated in the United States when Washington, D.C. special educator Barbara Aiello saw the need to bridge the gap created between teachers, students and those students with disabilities in the classroom. The integration of both mentally and physically handicapped students into classrooms happened a number of years prior in the United States than it did in On-

It wasn't until September of last

New crew

A new executive was sworn in this month for the Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service. It includes President Doug McLeod, Vice-President Bob Raine, Administration Director Paul Birtley, Operations Director Russ Power and Educational Services Director Gord Kearsey.

Guitar stolen

An electric guitar and amplifier worth \$750 were taken from a car parked on McIntyre Crescent overnight Feb. 12.

year that the Ontario Government implemented Bill 82 that integration became a reality. The program has become so successful it's being operated in 45 states and nine coun-

tries, including Canada. The north Halton group was formed after a group of representatives from area schools visited a performance by the Washington troupe in Oakville in October of 1984. The group was so impressed with the messages put forth that a local organization was formed. The group's vision since then has been to educate the community towards

understanding and accepting the disabled by means of the puppetry.

Each puppets performance lasts 20 minutes after which there is ample time for children and adults to ask questions about the puppets' disabilities. Cost for the puppets isn't cheap as each one is valued at about \$1,000 (U.S.).

The local group has purchased two puppets without disabilities as well as one with a disability. Valerie was donated by the Spina Bifida ad Hydrocephalus organization. The other two normal puppets were donated by the Kiwanis Club of

Georgetown and the Catholic Women's League of Georgetown. The North Halton group acts out disabilities such as Cerebral Palsy. Mental Retardation and Learning Disabilities.

The puppeters are Cathy Sinclair, Tina Zylstra and Elizabeth Kiddle. The trainer is Betty Rowley of Mississauga. Darlow Balsillie is the puppet co-ordinator. Benny Mackeod is the chairman. Tho group is looking for more puppeters, with three being the major goal. Those interested can call Darlow Balsillie at 877-3419.

For drug committee

Town spirit carries ball

The community spirit is carrying the ball now for the six year old Georgetown Drug Abuse Commit-

Started up by the Optimists, support for the Committee has spread into all the service groups in town.

"We sure don't want to stick our head in the sand and say we haven't got a problem," Committee member Ray Martin said. The Committee's 23 members have

regular visits to the local schools

and encourage youngsters to stay away from drug abuse through membership in the Chicken Club. Last year, the toll booth along Highway 7 raised \$800 for the Com-

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mittee. This year, the project was taken on by the local Lions, and had the support of the Burger King and Penny Gas Bar.

The local Knights of Columbus have also put their forces to work, challenging the community to come out for a five pin bowl-a-thon April 27. The funds are earmarked for the Committee.

For the first five years, the primary source of income for the Committee was the Optimists and the annual golf tournament called "Pete's tournament" after Optimist and Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy. That's coming up

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can always use more volunteers and help. The Drug Abuse office is located at 164 Guelph St. in

Georgetown and the telephone number is 877-0915.

Mr. Martin said the committee

Program costs high

Did you know the region's social services make up 16 per cent of Halton's operating budget? Major costs are for programs caring for the elderly, income assistance and day care. Provincial subsidies of between 50 to 100 per cent help defray most of Halton's social services expenses.

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