



## Volunteer offers tips

Kathleen Oxborn's three children may have grown and left the nest, but she's still changing diapers and feeding children.

Kathleen is a volunteer who minds the children of young mothers attending a weekly meeting of the Mothers' Morning Out program run by the Halton Children's Aid Society. The mothers learn tips on raising their children and managing money as well as other important information parents need to know. She also assists as a public relations resource person, frequently helping at malls and schools.

Kathleen began volunteering at Halton CAS five years ago because she realizes young mothers need all the support they can get from the Agency. But the Georgetown resident does not limit her generous donation of time to Halton CAS. She also canvasses for the Canadian Cancer Society and has recently canvassed for the United Way appeal.

"I like to have something to do," she says, "and volunteers are needed."

May is Red Shield Month and to officially announce the event, a proclamation was signed by Mayor Ross Miller. Seen here with him is (back row, from left) Dave Mares, Honorary Red Shield Campaign Chairman and Captain Wilson Perrin of the Salvation Army, Acton

Cladel. The Salvation Army is mounting its annual campaign for funds and this year their goal is \$13,485. In Acton there will be a residential door-to-door campaign while in Georgetown there will be a mail-in campaign. (Herald photo)

## Citizens' forum

### Looking for the answers

Editors Note: The following letter to Minister of Community and Social Services, John Sweeney was submitted to the Herald for publication.

Open Letter to Minister John Sweeney;

I am not writing to you today as the secretary of the Save Our Children Organization. I wish to appeal to your sense of justice and compassion on the basis of being a parent and practising Catholic. The Church struggles with the issue of moral injustices just as we, as individuals must seek answers. I understand how the issue of child sexual abuse is one of difficulty for all of us. As a child who lived in a sexual abuse free home, I feel

thankful to my parents. My children are very lucky to have survived their earlier years free of sexual abuse in a society which seems destined to self-destruct.

People have asked me why I became involved with this issue. The Church teaches us we are all God's children and I believe that we adults are responsible for the safety and well-being of all-especially children. Because sexual intercourse is a gift from God for the recreation of life, I have difficulty understanding why an alarming percentage of children are subjected to a cruel and unloving way of life. Why are we as adults letting this happen without trying to break the cycle of sexual abuse?

Statistics tell us that sexual abusers themselves were abused. Common sense tells us that the pattern must be broken before this society can gain any sense of self-worth. Can we risk our future as seniors to a society full of abused children at an age where they will be holding the purse strings of the government. I shudder to think of the possibilities.

Society as a whole has matured over the years so that we can now discuss morally conflicting subjects such as abortion, homosexuality and child sexual abuse without fear of being ostracized. All of these moral dilemmas have existed for more years than any of us have lived and some will still be discussed many years from now. However, a major step forward in stopping child sexual abuse can be achieved by providing long term therapy for these children. Maturity doesn't warrant society a pat on the back, maturity means we as a society must keep making progressive decisions to stop the cycle.

A quote from the "Progressive Farmer" prompted me to write this letter. "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

Sincerely  
Arlene Rousseau-President  
Save Our Children Organization  
Windsor and Essex County

Sincerely  
Linda MacDonald  
Windsor, Ont.

### Help for the children

Dear Sir,  
The victimization of women by men appears to be directly related to our sexist society in which male supremacy is reinforced at the cost of the female members.

Last year, would I have believed this statement? No! Do I now? Yes! Many times, people have asked me if the government considers the crime of child abuse a feminist problem. I have always said no. I was wrong and I admit this publicly.

Look at the way our government is made up. Predominately men! Does the government believe child abuse is a feminist problem? Yes, you can tell by the lack of concern on the governments' part to take positive action to better the care system for abused children and the non-offering parent (usually the mother).

Society's attitude a few years ago was, "What I don't see won't hurt me". Now there is a new awareness of the problem of child abuse. Society has matured, too had our provincial government couldn't do the same.

The Save Our Children Organization has been fighting the provincial government to mandate long-term child abuse therapy programs since September 1987. What progress have we made? We have managed to become a thorn in the government's side!

The Minister of Community and Social Services, John Sweeney, continuously tells us there are several service agencies to help abused children. I'm not sure where this man is getting his information from because it's fact, that he is not getting his information from this community. I also do not believe he is getting this type of information from any other community.

I recently attended a workshop put on by the Child Abuse Councils, Treatment Issues Committee on April 11th, 1988. Here's what we have to offer Essex County.

There were approximately 80 reported cases of child abuse in 1987 of preschool children. On a good day with no waiting lists, we were able to service 25 percent of these children. In the Latency age category (6-12 years of age) we were able to service approximately 30 percent of the reported cases. For adolescents, 13-16 years of age, it got better, we were able to service approximately 80 percent. What happens to the 75 percent of preschoolers, 70 percent of latency-aged children and the 80 percent of adolescents that we could not service. They fell through the slats of an uncaring system!

That will be put in the past as the Save Our Children Organization intends to see some major changes the right quickly. The government may have felt safely tucked away in their ivory towers, since the ones in Toronto have never had to deal with us face-to-face. But that will be changing very quickly. This organization's members have spent many hours and dollars (their own) trying to show the government the need for these changes. We are not going away until our job is done. If it isn't, Peterson had best enjoy his last three years as Premier.

Every member of the provincial government has a copy of our petition for the public to read and sign if they wish to. If you don't find this petition available to you at your local MPP's office please write to:  
SAVE OUR CHILDREN ORGANIZATION  
2645 TOTTEN AVENUE  
WINDSOR, ONTARIO

# IT'S ALMOST HERE!

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