

Special education teacher honored

She is a special elementary teaching assistant, and her peers thought her to be.

Beverley Whatnough, a special education teacher at M.Z. Bennett Public School and Limehouse Public School, was one of three people recognized by their peers at a dinner dedicated to all teaching assistants by the Halton chapter of the Council for Exceptional Students.

Through a nomination process by other teachers, Mrs. Whatnough was chosen to receive the Teacher of the Year Award for elementary students, Ulrike Kern-Cleland the Teacher of the Year Award for secondary schools, and Georgetown resident Eleanor Tyndall, the consultant for the Board of Education's program for mentally handicapped children, received the Educator of the Year Award.

"I was absolutely flabbergasted," Mrs. Whatnough said. She had no idea she would win the award.

The teacher also felt quite honored because the award is given by teachers.

Recipients of the awards exemplify excellence in teaching.

"You take a moment and say someone is doing an excellent job," said Gayle Rotenberg, the president of the Halton chapter of the Council for Exceptional Students. "It lets people know how proud we are of our teachers."

Mrs. Whatnough felt her strengths lie in the relationship she has with the children, other teachers and parents.

The teacher works with approximately 30 students in M.Z. Bennett

and Limehouse schools, where she spends a half day at each school.

She is in charge of programming for students, does education assessments of students needing special education classes and works with small groups of children in the classroom.

As well, Mrs. Whatnough manages the resource rooms of the two schools, which teachers browse through.

The challenge of being a special education teacher is to make sure the child maintains a good feeling about themselves, Mrs. Whatnough said. If they do not feel successful, they are hard to instruct.

The key lies in matching up the right program to fill the child's needs.

If it is not a good match, the teacher said, they will not feel successful.

With success comes the rewards of seeing the child make gains, and having the child feel he has made gains.

Born in Niagara Falls, Mrs. Whatnough has lived in a variety of places such as Montreal, Toronto, and Mossonee, before she and her family settled in Georgetown 20 years ago.

She received her schooling at Concordia University in Montreal, where she graduated with a bachelor of arts.

Mrs. Whatnough finished her education at the Lakeshore Teacher's College in Toronto.

Taking time off first to raise her family, Mrs. Whatnough began teaching with the Halton Board of Education 13 years ago.



Beverley Whatnough works with eight-year-old Allan Reynolds, a student at M.Z. Bennett Public School. The special education teacher was

nominated by her peers as teacher of the year for elementary schools. (Herald photo)

"Children are our future..."

Parents must become partners in education

By CHERYL MOODER
Herald Staff

Wally Beevor is not a futurist and he does not have a crystal ball to aid him in his job as director of education.

But what he has learned in his many years of working on different school boards is that change does not happen in a fast way.

People are very uncomfortable with change, he told an audience Thursday night at the George Kennedy Public School. It is very stressful.

In looking to the future, it is better to diagnose change than to subscribe, he said.

If you look at society there are several forces, such as government, the people's dissatisfaction, and technology, which have put pressure on the education system.

With Bill 30 and the increase of money to the private school system, the public school enrolment numbers have been dropping three to five per cent a year.

Another competitor to the public school comes from technology.

Recently, IBM created software packaged for the secondary school level to be marketed in Canada.

In George Radwan's report, which was released early in the spring, statistics show 78 per cent of the children leave school before they obtain their certificate.

At the general level, 56 per cent of the students drop out, Mr. Beevor said. Those students often end up in mental jobs.

One thing this report found was that at the different levels of study, students at the basic and general levels do not join clubs, such as the art and chess club, or participate in extra-curricular activities.

The effective school movement tries to design projects in order to make schools better, improve the instruction the students receive and ultimately improve the drop-out situation.

Halton Region has an excellent group of trustees dedicated to improving the school life for students, Mr. Beevor said.

In the recent budget, programs such as the music program and computer program, will insure equal access to all children of these items.

The director of education also cited the increased desire for parents to become full-fledged partners in the field of education.

"When parents become partners," Mr. Beevor said, "students, teachers and the community benefit."

There are numerous advantages for the children when their parents take part in education, he said.

First off, they set an example. The director was sure that the children of the parents who attended the night's meeting knew they were there.

"It is a powerful way to teach," Mr. Beevor said. "Example is the only way to teach."

The seeds of example may not germinate overnight, the director pointed out, but in time parents will reap the harvest.

Down deep, children have respect and admiration and receive a feeling that school work is important.

A second message, which is sent out loud and clear when parents get involved, he said, is that education is a life-long process.

"I, as mom and dad, am interested in your future," the director said.

Parents have a tremendous influence over their children and can be invaluable as teaching partners.

When they are involved with the school an important communication link is established between the students, parents and teachers, Mr. Beevor said.

It increases the student's motiva-

tion to learn. "Children want to learn," he said. "By showing you're interested they will want to work harder, he added.

The quality of learning is enhanced when parents take part in education.

Parents have found that when they help others they help themselves.

"Nothing great is achieved without enthusiasm," Mr. Beevor said. Parents can become another valuable resource.

The future of the world is truly in parents' hands, "because children are our future."

Mr. Beevor cited a Chinese proverb which best explained the parent's role in education:

"If you plan for a year, plant rice; if you plan for ten years, plant trees; if you plan for 100 years, educate men and women."

Kennedy Connection launched

Parents and teachers linked up Thursday night at the inaugural meeting of the Kennedy Connection.

The group, which is made up of parents of George Kennedy students, was officially launched in the gymnasium of the school after about eight months of planning.

Karen Hower, whose son had just started kindergarten, got the ball rolling in September 1987, when she knocked on the door of principal Carol Matheson with a proposal to form a formal parent group. George Kennedy has also had an active volunteer group, Mrs. Hower said. What the school needed was an umbrella group to act as a co-ordinating body.

A steering committee of 12 people spent the past months exploring different routes the group could take and looking at other parents groups such as the Home And School and Parent/Teachers Association.

The basic idea of the group is to enhance the communication between the parents and the school environment and to provide support for regular and extra-curricular programs set up in the school.

Mrs. Hower was pleased with the response they had for their first night. "I thought we had an excellent response," she said.

Speaker Wally Beevor commented on the approximately 70 who turned up for the evening. He has spoken to parents groups where only five or so have shown up.

It is important, in terms of the success of the Kennedy Connection, to have input from all the parents in the school.

George Kennedy is a very diverse school, housing English and French classes, as well as special education classes, Mrs. Hower said. It is also the largest school in Georgetown.

This is why it is important to have a parents group, she said. It is not just the teachers who are educating children.

The new Kennedy Connection executive includes: Karen Hower as president, Janet Woolen as vice-president, Cheryl Potosky as secretary, Donna Kole as treasurer and Debbie McIlvanna as community relations officer. There are also a number of standing committee members.

New air index system launched

Metropolitan Toronto and Oshawa have become the first Ontario communities to be served by a new air pollution reporting system which provides information to the public four times each day, Environment Minister Jim Bradley announced.

"The new Air Quality Index (AQI) system will warn people when high pollution levels are present, and give hourly updates as long as they persist," Mr. Bradley told guests at the official startup of the system in Toronto.

The AQI augments the 16-year-old Air Pollution Index (API) by measuring, analysing and reporting on a wider range of pollutants.

The existing API system measures two pollutants, sulphur dioxide and suspended particulate matter, which promote respiratory illnesses. The API will continue to be used as an alert and action system.

The new AQI will include the API, and add carbon monoxide, ozone, and nitrogen dioxide - all of which can affect health.

The AQI will be broken down into five categories:

1. Very Good: AQI 0-15, no adverse effects on people, animals or plants.
2. Good: AQI 16-31, no adverse effects on people or animals, and negligible effects on plants, property or aesthetic values.
3. Moderate: AQI 32-49, negligible effects on people and animals; may affect sensitive plants, property or aesthetic values.
4. Poor: AQI 50-99, adverse effects on sensitive people or animals; significant damage to vegetation, property or aesthetic values.
5. Very Poor: 100-plus, health problems to a large segment of the exposed population.

Under AQI, the public will be informed four times daily of what the air quality is and what is the most significant pollutant at that time. Under special adverse conditions, the report will be updated hourly, day and night, and the public will be informed as to when the pollution problem will likely end.

Police plan to hold slo-pitch fundraiser

The Halton Regional Police in conjunction with the Halton Regional Police Association is sponsoring the first annual Halton Regional Police/Juvenile Diabetes Charity Weekend planned for June 3, 4 and 5, in the City of Burlington. All proceeds from the various functions to be held that weekend will be donated to aid in Juvenile Diabetes Research.

The activities planned for the weekend are being coordinated by members of the Police Association's Slo-Pitch baseball team which is also co-sponsored by Chaps Restaurants of Burlington. The executive committee for the weekend consists of Detectives Earl Fletcher and Murray Drinkwater, Sergeant James Chapman and Mr. Tim Fredo of the Force's Planning and Research Bureau.

On Friday, June 3 at 7 p.m., the police team will be playing the Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey Club at Nelson Softball Park on New Street in Burlington. Admission to the park will be free and donations to the charity will be accepted. The Maple Leafs will be arriving at the park at 6:15 p.m. to sign autographs. All children under the age of 16 entering the park will be given an opportunity to win one of the many prizes which have been autographed by members

of the National Hockey League and the Canadian Football League. It is hoped that veteran NHL official, Don Koharski and other members of the NHL Officials Association will be present to umpire the ball game between the police and the Leafs.

On Saturday and Sunday, June 4 and 5, the police team will be hosting a Law-Enforcement Slo-Pitch Tournament at Sherwood Forest Park in Burlington for the two day tournament. Tournament play begins at 9 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday with the finals tentatively scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon.

The highlight of the weekend is hoped to be a charity dance on Saturday evening beginning at 8 p.m. at Nelson Arena on New Street in Burlington. Door prizes include return air fare for two to London, England, courtesy of Worldways, one week accommodation for two in Jacksonville, Florida, courtesy of Franco Steel of Burlington, and a full side of beef, courtesy of J and G Meats of Burlington. Numerous other door prizes and draw prizes will be available. Tickets for the dance are \$10 per person and can be obtained by calling the Burlington-Hamilton Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation at 335-2372.

Area high schools have also offered to assist in raising funds for the charity. Students from E.C. Drury in Milton, Oakville-Trafalgar in Oakville and M.M. Robinson in Burlington will be conducting a tag day in their respective communities on Saturday, June 4, 1988.

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