

Features

New hospital service works with the speech-impaired

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

Keith Baker of Georgetown no longer talks in simple sentences and can parlay an articulate and structurally complex sentence like any other boy his age thanks to the speech-language pathologists who are hosting an Open House May 8 at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital as part of the Speech and Hearing Month of May.

After eight months of specialized speech and language training, three-year-old Keith was discharged from the Speech-Language Pathology Department at the hospital.

His improved speech is one of several success stories speech-language pathologist Rosemary Boyer and Karen MacKenzie-Stepner will be able to share with the community at their open house from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

When Keith first came to the department, his sentences weren't very complex and he was having trouble enunciating certain sounds, like the letter 'K'.

Ms. Boyer explained that Keith would say "him color" where most three-year-old's speech patterns would have advanced to the point where they'd say "he is coloring."

Through an assessment, Ms. Boyer discovered Keith understood language well for his speech level and through practicing sounds, saying words and reading sentences Keith reached the speech level of his age group. She credited Keith's parents for their role in upgrading his level of speech.

If Keith's speech problems hadn't been corrected this early, Ms. Boyer said, it could have led to future academic and social problems. "It might have been difficult for Keith socially if other kids couldn't understand what he was trying to say," she said. "That can lead to frustration and that's something we want to avoid."

Working with children such as



Speech Language Pathologist Rosemary Boyer works through some word cards with three-year-old Kevin Baker of Georgetown at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital's Speech-Language Pathology department. Kevin's mom, Paula (second from right) looks over Speech-Language Pathologist Karen MacKenzie-Stepner's plans for the department's open house at the hospital scheduled for May 8 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Herald photo by Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot)

occupations department of the hospital, the service was provided from the hospital and an additional speech-language pathologist, Ms. MacKenzie-Stepner, was hired. The service now has its own room in the

hospital and patients are covered by OHIP.

Ms. Boyer and Ms. MacKenzie-Stepner will be available for information about speech and language pathology at the open house and on May 11 when they'll

be present at the Elks and Royal Purple of Canada's display at Georgetown Market Place. This group annually raised money during Speech and Hearing Month for children who need treatment or equipment to talk or

hear better. Kevin is just one area the pathology department services. Many of the service's clientele are older persons who have suffered a stroke and experience aphasia, a language problem.

The speech-language pathologists have been helping a woman who knew what she wanted to say, but couldn't get her mouth to form the words because she had a stroke. Together with the woman and her family, the pathologists designed a picture board that enabled her to communicate and gave her daily therapy to teach her more control of the movements of her mouth.

The pathologists also do swallow assessment for people who find it difficult to swallow. "We work with dietitians and family to determine what types of food consistencies they can't swallow and go from there," said Ms. MacKenzie-Stepner.

Other services the department provides include the area of neurology, where they assist individuals with neurological disorders to relearn language and improve production of speech sounds and oral motor movements; stuttering assistance to help individuals cope with their disorder and to increase the amount of fluent speech and assisting individuals with voice disorders to develop proper control of the vocal and respiratory systems for optimal voice production.

Both Ms. MacKenzie-Stepner and Ms. Boyer have their master's degree in speech and language pathology and have several years experience working in the field.

They now live in Georgetown, moving here after they were hired to work in Georgetown Hospital's Speech Pathology Department which opened in January, 1990. At first, Ms. Boyer handled all the local clientele by visiting them in their homes. When the hospital provided a room for the service in the oc-

Big Brothers organization appealing for help

By ROSE STARRATT
Herald Special

Big Brothers of Halton has been forced to stop accepting applications of new Little Brothers in the Milton/Georgetown/Acton area. This is because of the lack of men willing to become Big Brothers.

"Currently, we have 30 Little Brothers on our waiting list for the area. One boy has waited for over a year," said Evelyn Gransaul, executive director of Big Brothers. "And with an average of just one new Big Brother com-

ing in every three months, there is no way we can increase the case load. It would be unfair to raise the hopes of these boys and not be able to fulfill our promise."

Big Brothers matches men of good moral character over the age of 18, to father absent boys between the ages of six and 14. All Big Brothers go through our screening process. They must be able to give six references including a police check, medical certificate, work reference plus one from a relative and two from

friends." They are then put through an interview by the Executive Director.

While there are several reasons why these boys don't have a positive male role model, the result is always the same. Loneliness, frustration and longing. So, the most important items a Big Brother can bring to the relationship is commitment, companionship, friendship and time.

Mrs. Gransaul adds, "There are many men in the Halton com-

munity who meet these requirements but for some reason they don't come forward. We charge no fees or dues and the Big Brother does not have to spend money. The idea is time. We need men who have four hours a week to devote to his Little Brother.

"The interests of the boys are varied so great care is taken to form a match that is compatible. Some Little Brothers want a fast game of 21 in the court while another might be curious as to

how a new computer program works. Whatever the interests, there is someone out there to match them. If they would just come forward!"

If you believe you are Big Brother material or even if you know of someone who would make a wonderful Big Brother, then please, call the Big Brother office at 847-7267.

Don't hesitate. We need you today! The boys we nurture today are the fine men of our tomorrow.



Big Brother Ron Fraser poses with his little brother Warren Vivlan at the Big Brothers of Halton office building. The organization is looking for new

men to be a big brother to over 30 boys who need one and are presently unmatched. (Photos submitted)

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