

Disappointing turn out at local child care forum

By WENDY LONG

Special to the Halton Hills Weekend

A mere 20 people, staff included, showed up at a public child care forum at Georgetown District High School June 10. Not one man was present.

Child care forums in selected cities and towns across Ontario were scheduled by the provincial government to get input and ideas from the public on upcoming child care reform in Ontario.

Gillian Burns, supervisor of the Maple Avenue Child Care Centre, which is a regional centre, said the numbers were similar in Oakville and Milton at those forums in May. The consultation process with community forums is complete by the

end of June.

Speaking and facilitating discussion were Elizabeth Wagle, program supervisor of child care for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and Diane Ayliffe, manager of children's services for the Region of Halton.

"Child care is an investment in our future," said Wagle. Wagle stated that the provincial government is advocating the expansion of non-profit community based child care centres and a universally accessible system.

"It's not a welfare service, but an essential public service," said Wagle.

Wagle acknowledged that although Ontario has some of the highest standards of child care in



ELIZABETH WAGLE

North America, it is often too expensive, not always available and funding is not evenly allocated between regions in the province.

Why reform now, in a recession? In some communities child care is a crisis situation, said Wagle, adding that the province's goal is to make child care "effective and efficient province-wide."

Wagle and Ayliffe opened the

forum into two discussion groups, tackling the issues of affordability, quality, accessibility and sound management in child care.

No one in attendance chose to discuss quality.

"We know we have good quality child care in Halton," said Kathi Hull, representing the Georgetown Parent-Child Centre. "It's the other things we need direction in."

Several women asked for clarification of how child care funding is allocated.

Another group inquired about affordable accessibility.

Statistics revealed that a whopping 87 per cent of children in Halton are using unlicensed day

care.

"I know of one woman who has 10 to 12 children in a private home," said one woman. Others at the table nodded right away in agreement. "I'm waiting 'til one of them gets hurt."

Many said they feel that licensed day care is unaffordable, while others said there are other reasons for using unlicensed day care such as a home environment and consistent care. Sometimes unlicensed day care is a neighbor down the street or a friend.

"But sometimes you close your eyes to what's going on because it's all you can afford," said one participant.

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NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GEORGETOWN AND DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



The Annual Meeting of the Georgetown & District Memorial Hospital will be held at the North Halton Golf & Country Club at 7:30 p.m. on June 25, 1992.

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: MR. DENNIS TIMBRELL, PRESIDENT ONTARIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

ALL WELCOME! AGENDA

1. Opening Remarks
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on June 27, 1991.
3. Report of the Chair/Executive Director
4. Report of the Chief of Staff
5. Report of the President of the Hospital Volunteers Association
6. Auditor's Report
7. Report of the Treasurer
8. Appointment of Auditors for 1992-93
9. Address by Mr. Dennis Timbrell, President, Ontario Hospital Association
10. By-law Amendment
11. Other Business
 - 11.1 Remarks by Retiring Board Chair
12. Election of Directors
13. Adjournment

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