



CAPTIVE AUDIENCE!

Acton Parent-Child Resource Centre staff member Dorothy Allen reads a story to four attentive youngsters last Wednesday at the Band Hall. From left: Taylor Begg, 3, Matthew Bentley, 3, Justine Watts, 3, and Jesse Watts, 4. (Doug Harrison photo)

Centre is a haven for parents

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

There is a sense of intense curiosity, great fun and shared experience when you walk through the door of the Acton Parent-Child Resource Centre in the Band Hall.

For pre-school children, the Centre provides great toys, an innovative program of songs, crafts, games and on a busy day, 30 or 40 potential playmates.

For parents and caregivers, the Centre is a gathering place to chat over coffee, commiserate over child-raising challenges and find answers to parenting questions.

The centre's vast resources — both enthusiastic, knowledgeable staff, an extensive library of parenting information, and a toy-lending library — are extra components to programs being offered at local nurseries and drop-ins.

For Centre manager Mary Piercy, who helped start the program a decade ago, the Centre

continues to evolve. "What started as a straight drop-in program has grown — first as a YMCA program and then as an ASSIC program," Piercy explained recently.

"Our outlook and sense of direction has broadened to include things like having a music appreciation class come in and use the Centre one morning a week, to having occasional workshops, fitness and craft classes and visits from the Public Health nurse.

"We also liaise more with other community groups and organizations to have information that parents need by staging workshops and seminars," Piercy said.

All of the Centre's programs are aimed at helping parents and caregivers provide their children with the highest quality of care that they can.

Caregiver start-up kits are available for people going into the child care business and there are theme

kits available as well.

Piercy said although there is no typical user, they all have their children's best interests at heart.

"Many people come here just thinking in terms of getting their child socializing and maybe getting to know other moms.

"But my hunch is that after they've been here for a little while they take advantage of some of the resources we have and the wealth of information that our members have," Piercy said.

"I think that one of our main strengths is our staff — Cathy Gerrow and Dorothy Allen. Both of them are mothers who live in Acton and both are incredibly friendly with new members."

The Centre is open Mondays and Fridays from 9:30 to 11:30 am and 1 to 3 pm and Wednesday from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm. The yearly membership fee is \$25.

You can get more information by calling 853-2574.

MP wants input

Halton-Peel MP Julian Reed is reminding Acton residents that he wants comments on federal politi-

cal issues that matter to you, whether immigration, gun control or the next Paul Martin budget.

You can reach Reed at his constituency office: 877-2900.



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