

# Oatmeal that warms hearts and tummies

BY DEBORAH QUAILE

One north Halton toy store is part of a network that's helping children across Canada start their day with food in their tummies and warmth in their hearts.

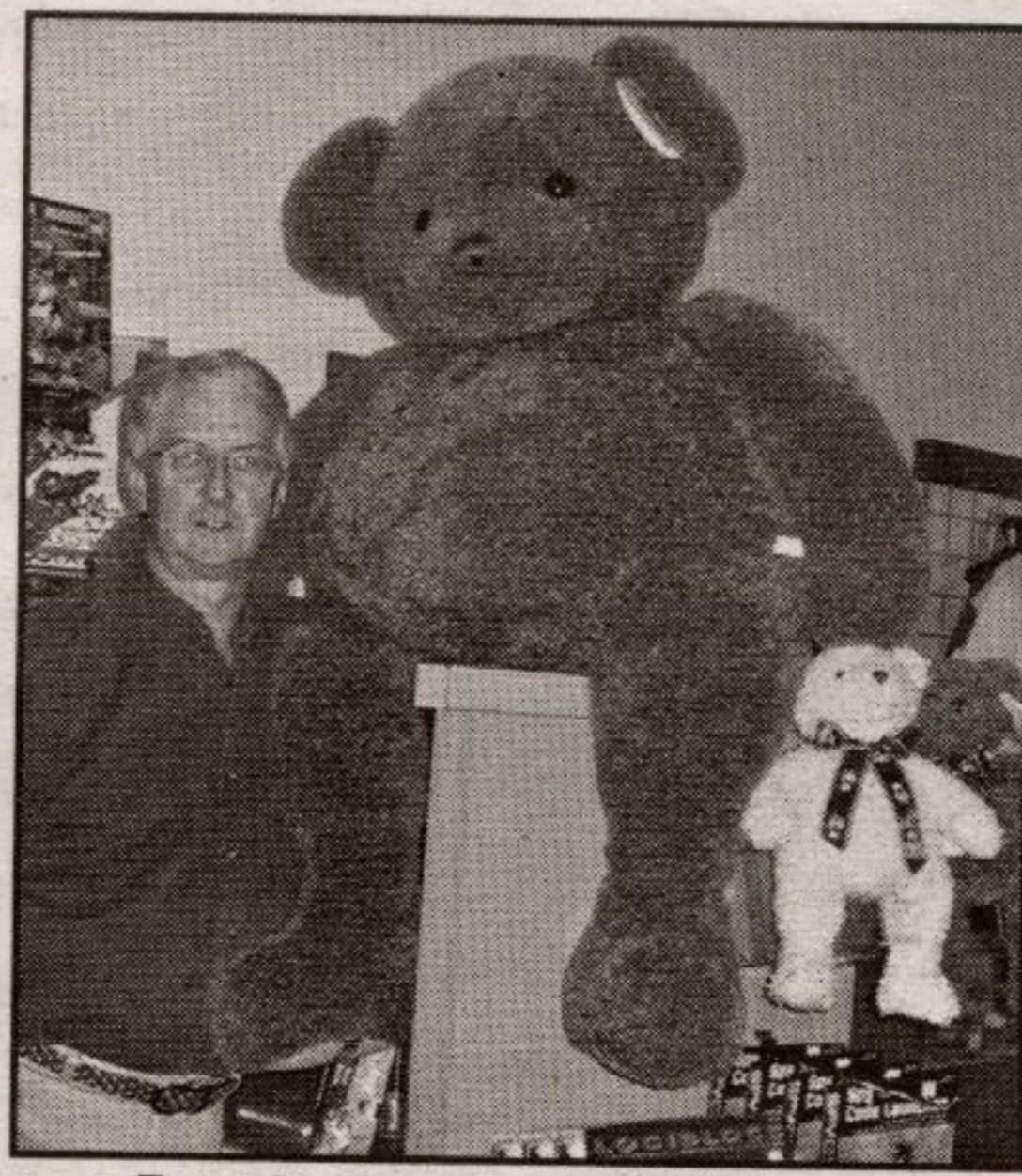
Oatmeal the Breakfast Bear, a holiday toy program, will provide 25 per cent of the proceeds from every sale to Breakfast for Learning. Oatmeal will be sold at Nature's

Fire in Milton for \$19.95, of which \$5 will help provide food for learning in local nutritional programs - healthy meals that children need to succeed in school.

"This fundraising initiative gives stores an opportunity to become involved in supporting local school nutrition programs in their communities," says Ron Kennedy, owner of Nature's Fire. "Oatmeal the Breakfast Bear is our way of helping Canadian children make the most out of their school day." Proceeds raised from Oatmeal will be redistributed to local nutrition programs. "The Neighbourhood Toy Stores of Canada, an independent association of toy stores, is working

in conjunction with this program. Independent toy stores are the only place to find Oatmeal."

The bears are "soft and squishy and cuddly - a great gift," Mr. Kennedy notes. The take-me-home size Oatmeal is 16 inches tall, completely washable, and has some beans in his paws to add a little weight, but Mr. Kennedy also has an enormous breakfast bear in his



Ron Kennedy and Oatmeal

front display window that recently drove Thomas the Tank Engine in the Milton Santa Claus parade.

Breakfast for Learning statistics point out that in Canada more than 31 per cent of elementary and 62 per cent of secondary school students don't eat breakfast on a daily basis. Without the necessary fuel for the body, the brain is unable to begin the day alert and ready for action. The Breakfast for Learning program, a national, non-profit organization dedicated to supporting child nutrition, helps fund breakfast, lunch and snack programs in schools across the country, working with communities to develop and maintain programs. There are currently 26 nutrition programs served by approximately 400 volunteers for more than 12,000 students in Halton.



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*Darlene Wazilkowski*

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