

# Rural Alert saves little girl lost

## Organization shows what neighbours can do

By ANN KORNUA

When a nine-year-old North York girl with Downs Syndrome wandered away from her family at Andrews Scenic Acres on October 3 the surrounding community reacted immediately and began a search for her. Geoff Knuff, a retired school teacher and Rural Alert team captain, received the call first from Andrews Scenic Acres in the late afternoon. He quickly started calling other members of the Rural Alert Community Watch to keep their eyes open for the little girl and to ask their neighbours to search their properties.

Geoff Knuff and Bernie Coyle have been residents of Esquesing for over 30 years and for the past six years they have been the co-coordinators in their area for the neighborhood watch called Rural Alert. When warnings from the police or concerned neighbours are issued the information is directed to Geoff and Bernie to pass on to their neighbours. Through a telephone network they inform their neighbours of such things as suspicious strangers posing as salesmen, break-ins, missing people and stolen vehicles. The members of Rural Alert feel strongly about keeping their communities safe.

Through the Rural Alert phone network, word was passed to people in the area that the little girl was missing together with her physical description and the type of places in which she was likely to seek shelter. Neighbours searched their own fields and forests. The police swept the fields with trained dogs. They then ordered in their helicopter, equipped with thermal imaging, which is normally used to spot illegal drug cultivation, but which can also "see" the heat of a human body in the dark. Neighbours with ATVs were asked to come out to help out in sweeping area fields.

Geoff Knuff said that "though we are just regular people, not trained police or rescue people, we felt that we could help because we all know the area well. Though everyone pulled together, the heroes in this story are Keith and Shannon Carmen."

Keith Carmen, who was available for comment said, "My wife and I are

not the most active in the Community Watch program, but we have lived here for 30 years. It wasn't until 10pm we received a phone call looking for volunteers for the search so we headed off to see what was going on. I decided to talk to one of the cops and told him I knew the area for over 30 years and wanted to go investigate areas where we thought a little girl might be. We were checking tree lines and that's where we found her sitting under a tree, shivering. We didn't waste any time at all. My wife took her jacket off and bundled her up and we tore across the field to get her back to safety. She was really cold and scared and we were worried she was going to go into shock."

What could have been a tragedy was avoided, not by the technology of thermal search equipment, but by concerned community members in Halton Hills who networked together. Geoff and Bernie urge people everywhere to support their own local Community Watch program or to contact their local police force if one doesn't already exist.

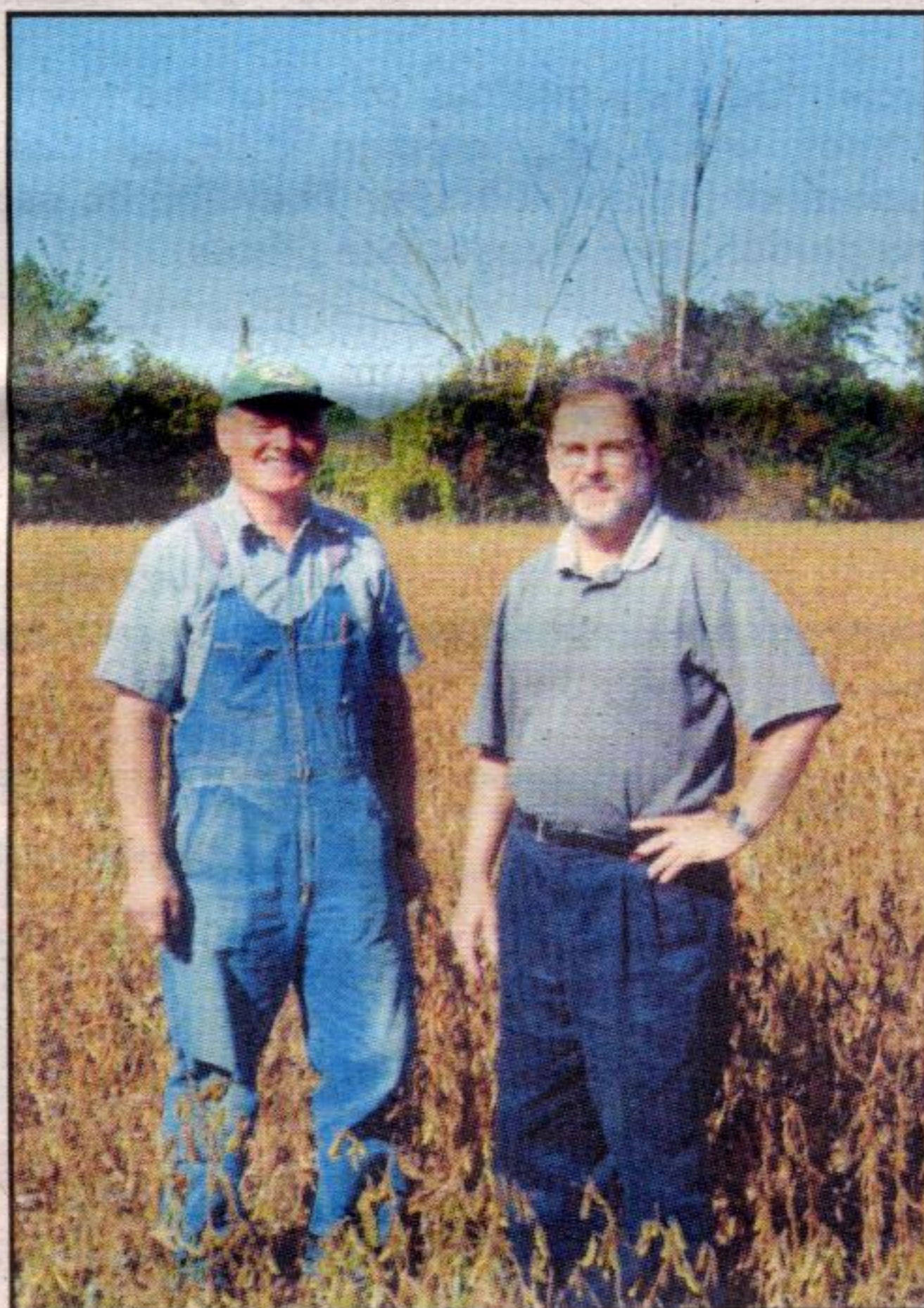


PHOTO BY ANN KORNUA  
Geoff Knuff and Bernie Coyle the co-ordinators of the Esquesing 10-4 Rural Alert Watch for over six years stand in the soybean field that belongs to Grace Hume where the nine-year-old girl was found by Keith and Shannon Carmen on October 3.



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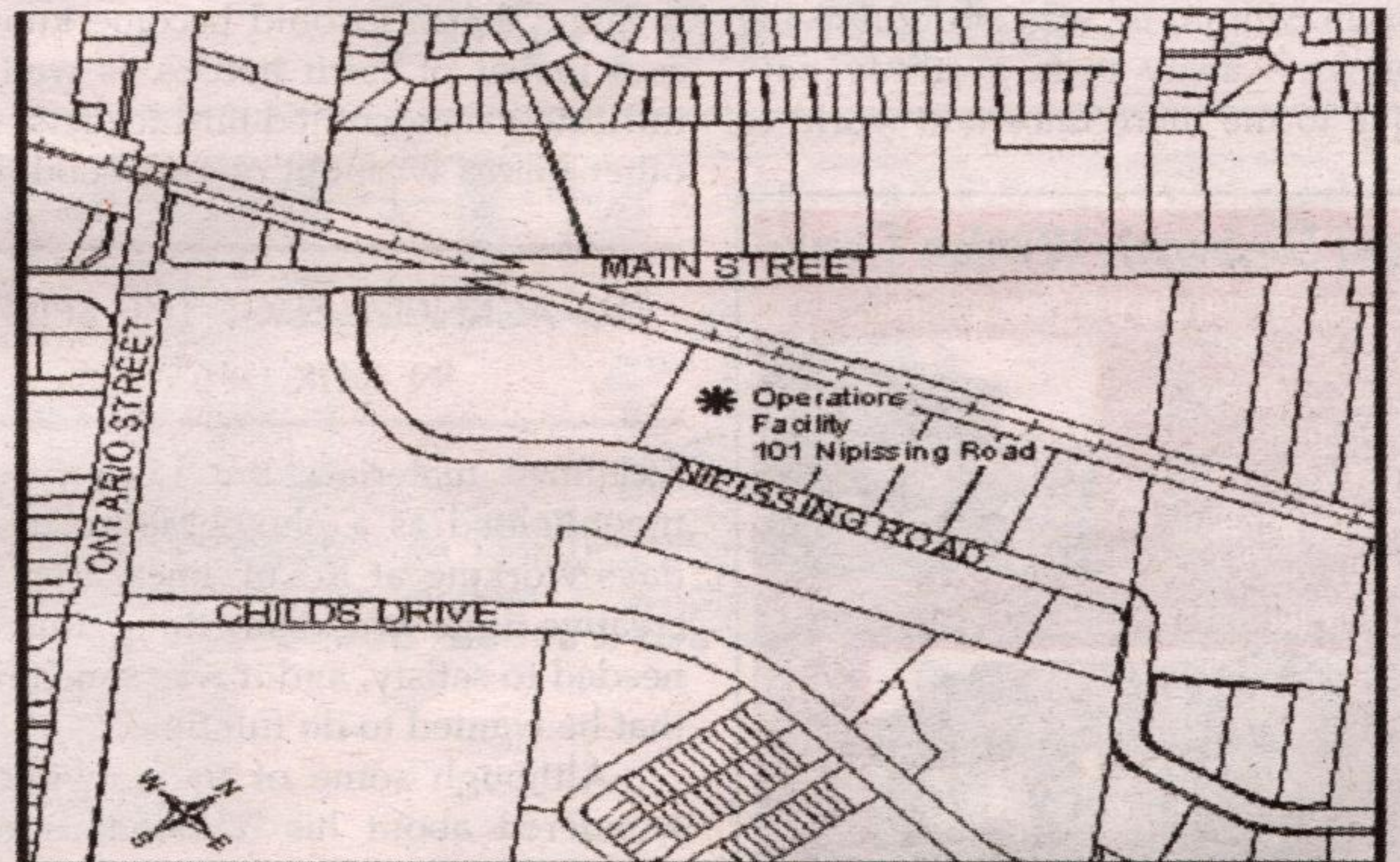


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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

### Abandonment and Relocation of Operations Facility 101 Nipissing Road Class Environmental Assessment Study

Tuesday October 19, 2004 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
at Hugh Foster Hall (43 Brown Street)



Key Plan

The Town of Milton has initiated a Class Environmental Assessment to consider the relocation of the Town's Engineering Services - Operations Facility currently located at 101 Nipissing Road.

The study will define the current Operations Facility deficiencies and consider, evaluate and detail alternative solutions and design concepts. In addition, consideration will be given to projected growth, future service demand requirements, current Operations status and the possible advantages of a multi-purpose site for a Fire Dept. training centre, transit depot, animal control and future Milton Hydro facility

The study will be conducted in compliance with Schedule 'C' of the Municipal Engineers Association "Municipal Class Environmental Assessment", (June 2000).

A key component of the study will be consultation with interested stakeholders (public and regulatory agencies). A Public Information Centre (PIC) will be held on October 19, 2004 at Hugh Foster Hall (43 Brown Street) from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Interested parties will be given an opportunity to review and discuss issues related to the project, including existing conditions, an assessment of alternatives, selection of the preferred alternative and environmental considerations.

**Mr. Rick Tipping**  
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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

### Proposed Taxicab/Limousine Licensing By-law

As required by the Municipal Act, 2001, the Town of Milton will hold a public meeting to outline and receive input on the proposed taxicab/limousine by-law on Monday, October 18, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

The draft by-law is available on line at [www.milton.ca](http://www.milton.ca), or at the Clerk's Office, Town of Milton, 43 Brown Street, Milton. If you have any questions please contact Selena Campbell, Licensing Officer, at 905-878-7252 ext. 2133.