

Was slated to close July 15

Acton Jr. Y program gets extension to end of the year

Parents who were going to have to find an alternative for their kids by mid-July because the Acton Jr. Y program is being eliminated, have been given a reprieve.

Two weeks ago parents were informed by letter that the program wouldn't be offered after July 15 due to consistent low enrolment and a rent increase. However, the closure date has now been extended to December 31.

A story on the parent's plight appeared in last Wednesday's (May 22) *Independent & Free Press*.

Rhonda Sloane, YMCA of Greater Toronto Children's Services regional manager, said Y management met last Thursday and decided on the extension.

She said they heard the opinions "of the families very clearly" and want to make a last effort to increase enrolment in the program.

"We're not in the business of closing, we're in the business of opening," said Sloane.

She said they will work with the parents— tap into their connections, energy and passion— to come up with a plan to market the Y program.

Pat Pacheco, who has two children in the program and sent letters to other parents urging them to join "in fighting the bureaucracy that is closing our day care," is

pleased with the decision.

"I feel wonderful," said Pacheco. "It gives us enough time to hopefully convince them to keep the centre open."

Sloane said the Y also plans to look for alternative ground floor space in Acton to house the program.

She said in order to continue to offer the Jr. Y program they need to achieve 80 per cent of their full-time capacity. Currently they have 9.7

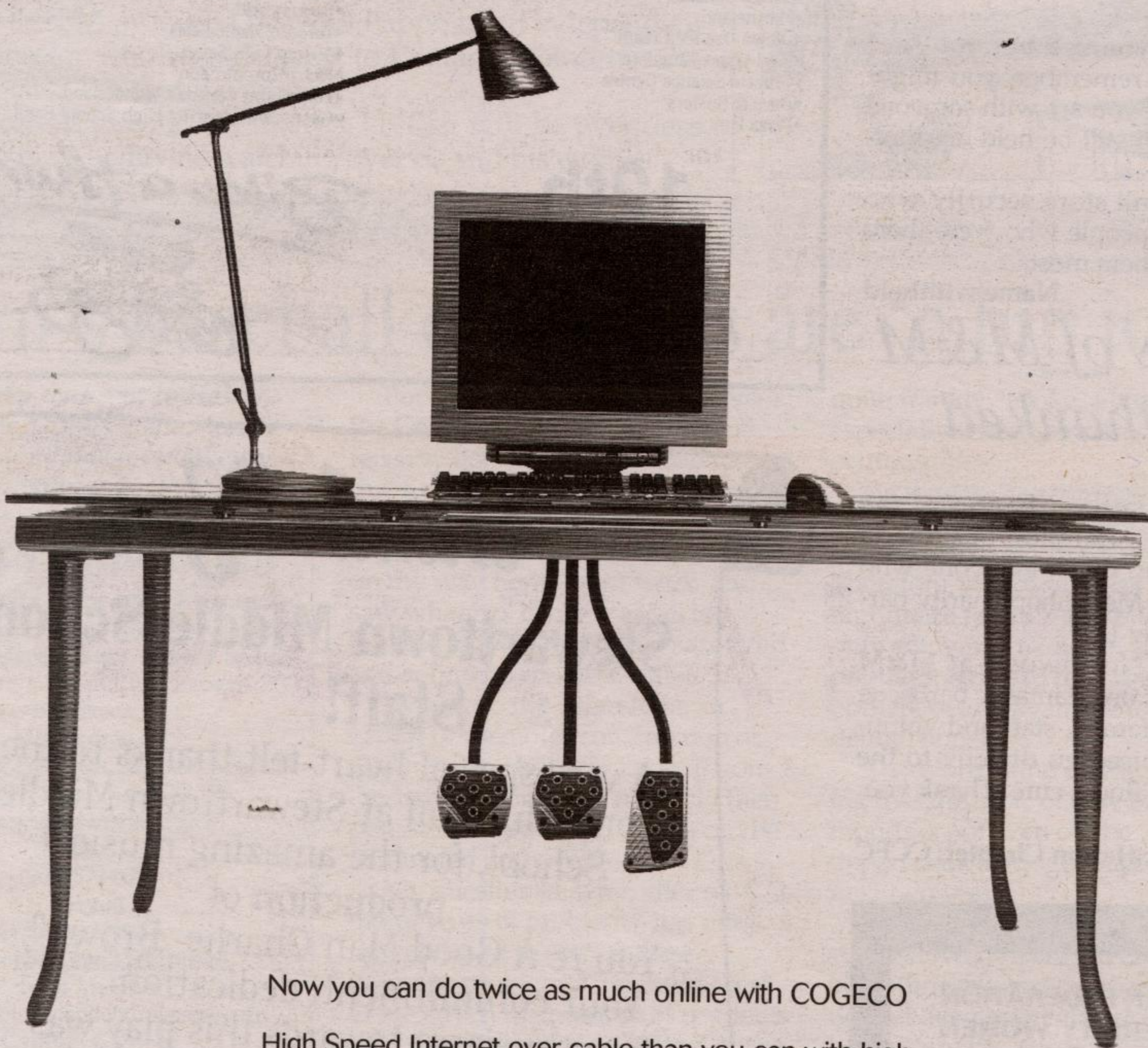
full-time equivalent children enrolled in the program with a capacity of 32.

Parents will receive official notification of the program closure in October if they can't increase enrolment to the required level.

Anyone who has ground floor space available in Acton for the program should call (519) 853-0909.

—By Lisa Tally
staff writer

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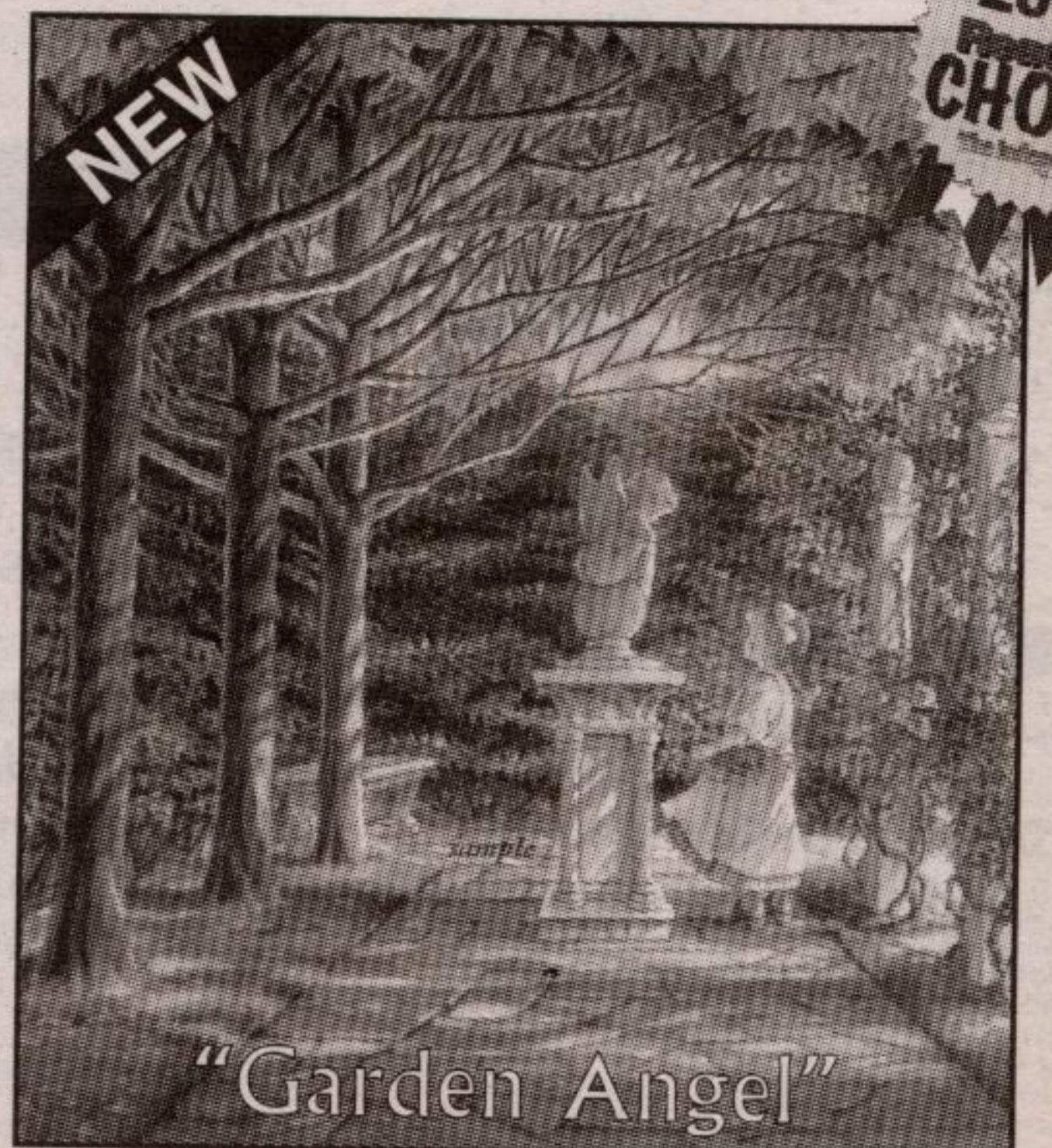
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