

Stature no roadblock for local teenager

Jonathan Fuller doesn't let something like his short stature stand in the way of leading a full and happy life.

Fuller, 16, of Georgetown is only 4'5" and when he is fully grown figures he will only reach 4'10".

Due to achondroplasia, a genetic condition that results in disproportionately short arms and legs, Fuller is a dwarf.

The condition has not stopped the Grade 11 student at Christ the King High School, from participating in all the activities he loves. He plays hockey, coaches lacrosse, plays golf and snowboards.

According to the organization Little People of America, achondroplasia occurs once in approximately 26,000 to 40,000 births and the overwhelming majority of people who have it enjoy normal intelligence, normal life spans and reasonably good health.

Fuller's mother Lynn said that her son has experienced some health problems related to his condition over the years.

"As an infant he had hydrocephalus and numerous ear infections," she said.

She also said Jonathan has an enlarged forehead, flat feet, is bull-legged and has had several dental problems, which are all characteristics of the condition. Orthopedic problems are also common.

She said her son regularly attends a dental and orthopedic clinic at The Hospital for Sick Children.

"He had a few problems, but they always seemed to be overcome," she said.

Fuller said when he was younger—in Kindergarten and Grade 1—there was not a huge difference between his height and the height of his friends, but that has changed, as he has gotten older.

"Once I hit (teen age) that's when it really started," said Fuller, whose friends now stand a foot or so taller than him.

But the difference in height doesn't bother him.

"I don't even think about it," he said. "My brother doesn't even know I'm different."

He doesn't get teased about his height at school but there have been times while walking down the street he has been called a midget.

"It used to really tick me off

before," said Fuller. "Now I'm used to it."

He added that doesn't happen to him at school.

"A lot of my friends are very protective of me. (They) try to make sure everything goes well."

While there are organizations for dwarfs, such as Little People of Ontario, Fuller said he is not interested in joining because he would "rather just hang out with my friends here."

Fuller said the only time his height has caused him any real problems is in his job search.

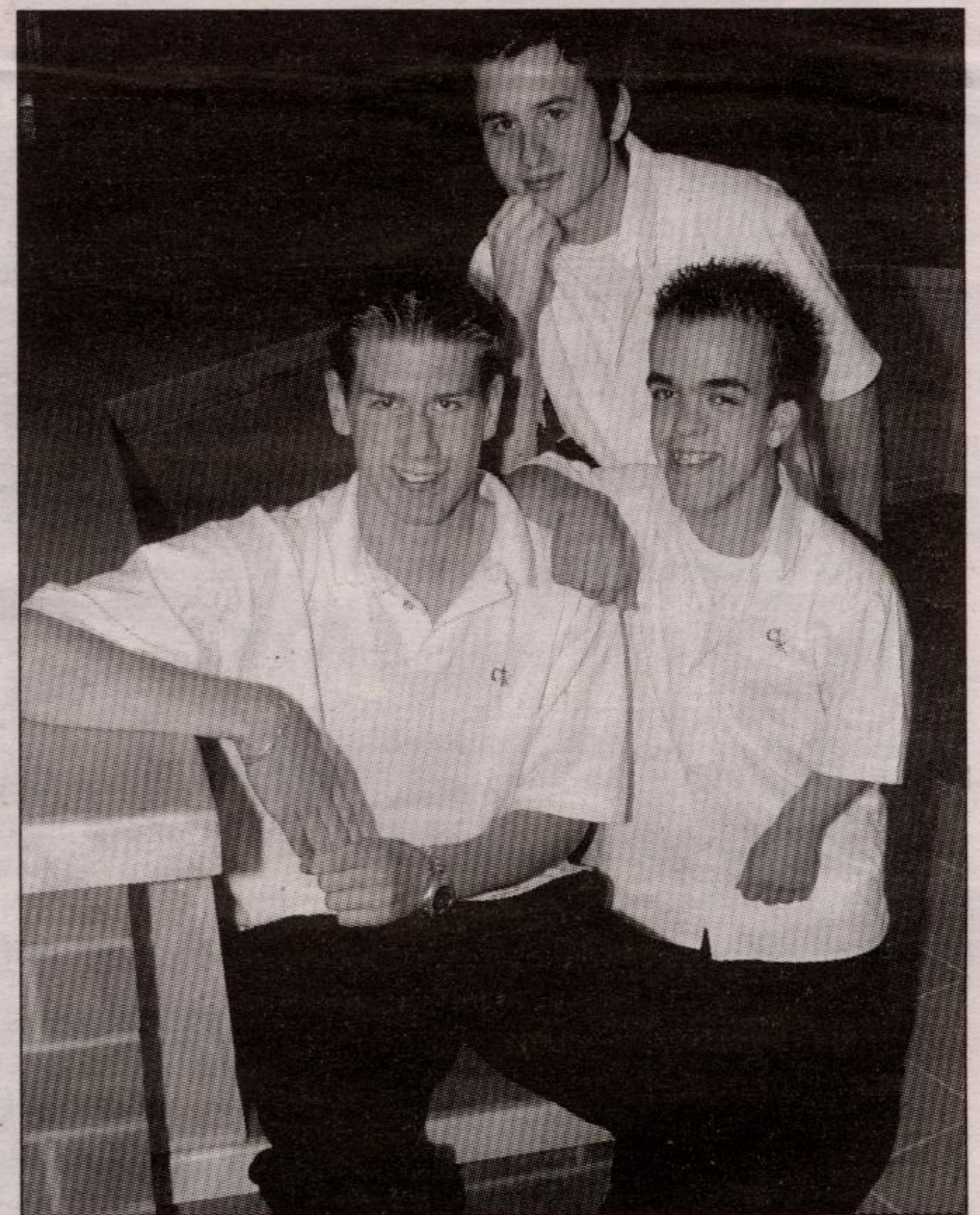
He believes his size is the reason he wasn't hired at a local fast food restaurant after having seven interviews over the past couple of years.

"I don't know what other reason why they wouldn't hire me," said Fuller. "It makes me sick, what is happening."

Despite that experience, Fuller continued to look for work and landed a job at Food Basics. He is set to start there tomorrow (Thursday).

Fuller plans to go to college after graduating from high school and perhaps study business.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



Jonathan Fuller (right) is joined by his friends Darren Legree (seated) and Mike Magistrale, as they enjoy school activities at Christ the King High School. Fuller, a dwarf, hasn't let his size stop him from enjoying life to the fullest.

Photo by Ted Brown

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