

Recruiter hoping new incentive program will help lure doctors to town

Continued from pg. 1

"We haven't seen a new physician come to Acton in four years," said Sugden-Praysner.

In an effort to alleviate the problem in Acton Sugden-Praysner said Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette asked the CAO of Halton Healthcare Services, which Georgetown Hospital will soon merge with, for help.

As a result, a new incentive program featuring interest-free loans and relocation funds will be offered through the

tuition coverage up to a maximum of \$40,000.

"The town of Halton Hills has an additional \$15,000 available, which is like a relocation grant," said Sugden-Praysner.

She noted the demographics for doctors are changing in Halton and across Canada and that there are differences even between municipalities.

"Milton has a lot of new, young doctors. Burlington and Oakville have more established and older physicians with typically a larger patient base."

She said the Halton Hills doctors are also younger (in their late 30s and early 40s) and there are fewer of them.

The way doctors are working is also changing, she said.

"I know some (older) physicians who work 80 hours per week. There are a lot of younger doctors who want a life... A lot of new doctors are females with families" who may be working 40-50 hours a week, and also helping out with clinics.

In her ongoing quest to bring more GPs to Halton, Sugden-Praysner and one physician from each of the three under-served municipalities recently embarked on an annual recruitment tour. During the last week of September she and the medical trio did a whirlwind tour of five

Ontario universities in five days, Queen's, McMaster, Western Ontario, Toronto and Ottawa, talking to medical students with questions about Halton.

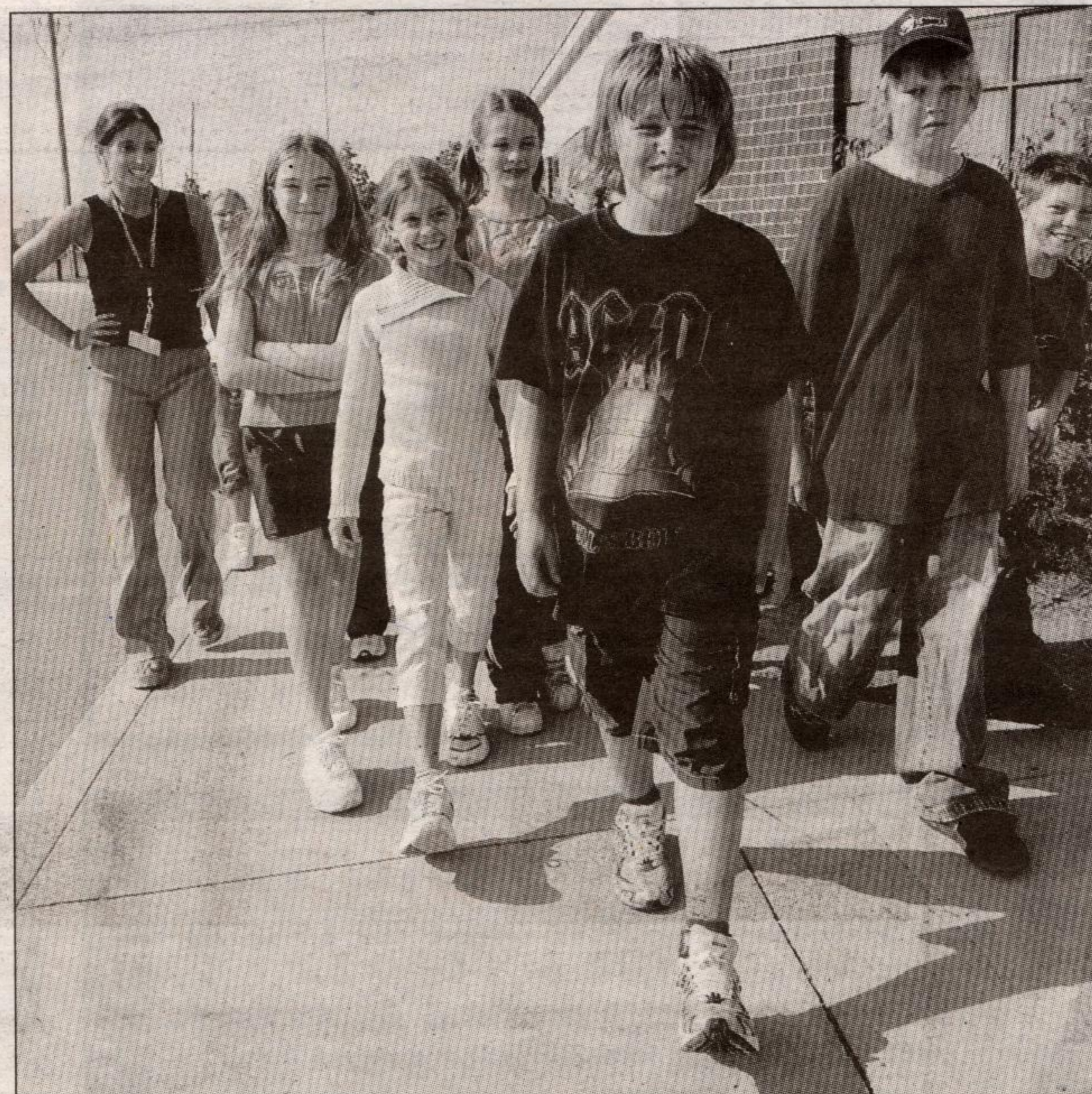
"It's the fourth recruitment tour I've been on. It was very busy, lots of leads," said Sugden-Praysner, saying her group had contact with about 300 medical students and residents during the tour.

She said while Halton has many attributes to offer new doctors including its proximity to larger centres, its urban/rural mix and its current medical community, she still has to "sell" the doctors on coming to the region.

"They can go anywhere. The world is their oyster," she said.

In the end she said the decision on whether or not to set up a practice in Halton often comes down to employment options for the doctor's spouse, and schooling for their children.

—By Tim Whitnell, special with files from Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



Walk this day

Taking part in the recent Walk to School day, St Catherine of Alexandria Grade 6 students were led by their teacher Claudia De Fazio (left) as they walked for 25 minutes around the Georgetown south area. Around 400 Grade 1-6 students took part in the program designed to promote fitness. Photo by Ted Brown

'They (doctors) can go anywhere. The world is their oyster.'



Physician recruitment co-ordinator
Angela Sugden-Praysner

hospital starting next January for the first three family doctors to open full-time practices in Acton.

Those incentives are in addition to incentives already offered by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to doctors who practice in underserved areas.

"We're hoping that will help," said Sugden-Praysner.

"I don't know if there is one particular drawback," Sugden-Praysner said when asked why it's so difficult to attract doctors to Acton.

She pointed out Acton is a smaller town and not all doctors want to work in such a small community. She added there is currently only one clinic location in Acton and some physicians want to be closer to a hospital.

An established doctor will care for anywhere from 1,300-2,000 patients. The MoH says that municipalities should have one family doctor for every 1,380 residents; any number above that may deem that town or city to be under-served.

An under-served designation allows municipalities to apply for funding grants to be used as incentives for new doctors to locate in their area. Relatively new medical graduates may be eligible for up to \$10,000 per year in

Upper Canada College gets approval to sever property for development

The Town of Halton Hills' Committee of Adjustment approved an application by Upper Canada College (UCC) to sever a portion of its property in Norval for a housing development.

The severance involves a 9.7 hectare block of land from the total 180-hectare property.

The lands are currently used for an outdoor education centre by the College and the retained lands will retain that mandate. But plans for the smaller portion, with frontage on Guelph St. and McFarlane Dr., calls for the development of 257 residential units.

Approval of the severance does not imply approval for the subdivision; that is still subject to Official Plan, zoning and subdivision amendments, which must go through the Town's Planning Department.

As well, water and wastewater capacity which is limited at best in

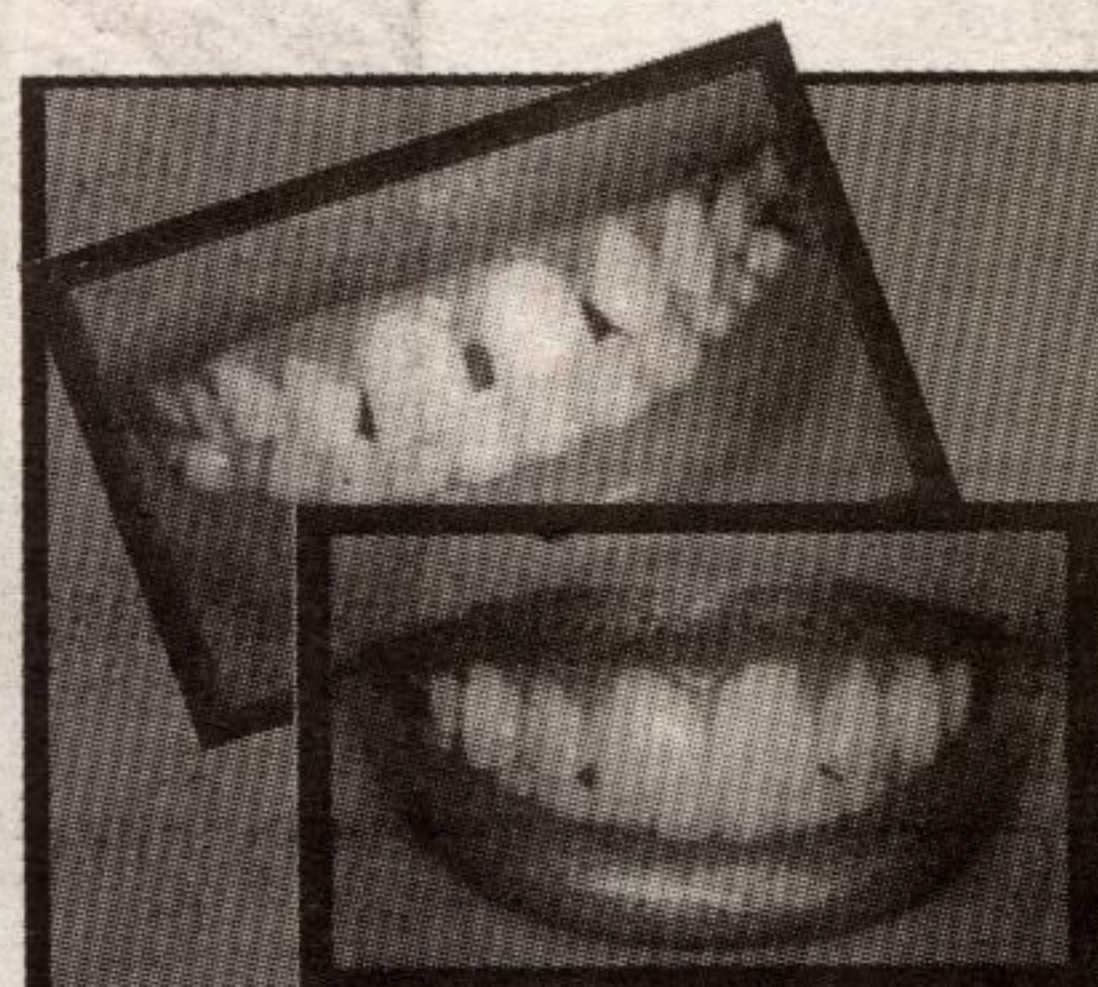
Halton Hills— has not been allocated to this proposal.

More than 80 letters of objection were received from the neighbouring property owners regarding the severance and Kay Bigg attended the Committee of Adjustment meeting to add her voice.

She told the four members of the committee, which is appointed by council, that once the severance is approved there would be no way to stop the development. Her objections included increased traffic on both Guelph St. and McFarlane Dr. and the destruction of the flora and fauna living on the UCC lands.


Credit Valley Conservation had also requested— through a Town's planning representative— a deferral until the environmental sensitive lands on the property can be clearly defined.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer



ZOOM TOOTH WHITENING SYSTEM

Shade changes of 6 to 10 shades in about an hour

 your smile says so much.

Cosmetic Dentistry
22 Guelph Street
downtowngeorgetowndental.com

(905)877-4371