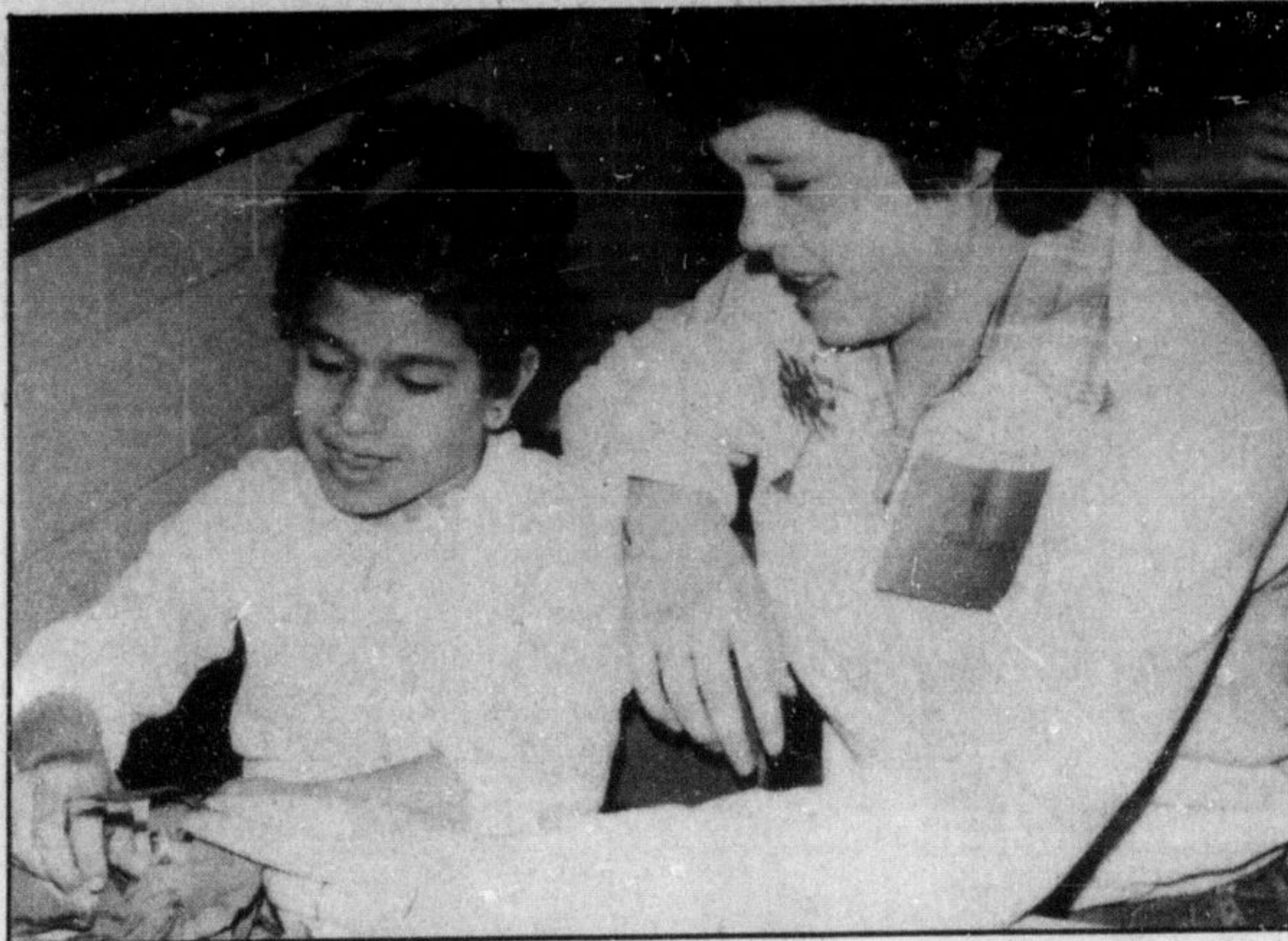




A WINKING SANTA is painted on one of the windows at St. Peter's School by Valerie St. Denis. Valerie was helping decorate the school in the Christmas spirit.



NICOLE BATIKA (Left) gets some help from Kim McDonald in creating a Christmas wreath of green and red crepe paper. The wreath was part of the Christmas decorations in St. Peter's School's Joy Day.

Christmas arrives at St. Peter's School

By Peter Mills
It took a whole day to do it, but the spirit of Christmas is firmly established at St. Peter's school.
The school suspended classes on Friday, divided the student population into groups, then let them loose to decorate the school in the Christmas motif.
"We're preparing the students for Christmas," said principal Kevin Finnegan. The day was called "Joy Day."
"Today, they're experiencing the joy of Christmas; and later, we'll get them to recognize the lack of joy Christmas holds for other, less fortunate members of our society."
"That's what charity is all about."

The morning was devoted to the decorating of the school, including building, painting and assembling the decorations, and putting them in place in the various parts of the school.
The afternoon included a mass and singing of Christmas carols.
The groups of students decorating the school included members of all grades and classes, so a cross-section was present in each group.
Mr. Finnegan said each group was put under the supervision of a staff member.
"That's not just teachers, that includes myself, the secretary, the caretaker... everybody," Mr. Finnegan said.

Educator selects dollars as a main issue in 1980s

Of the six major issues facing Halton's Board of Education in the next decade, economics rates as the most important issue.

The raising and spending of money was explained by Education Director Em Lavender during his progress report of the board's Long Term Plan.

The other issues named in the report, tabled at Thursday's board meeting in Burlington, were employer-employee population and declining enrolment.

With the Long Term Plan the board hopes to chart as steady a course as into the '80's. Halton educators and staff started work on the plan, which is to be completed by October, 11 months ago.

In his report Lavender predicted a mill rate increase of 55 per cent by 1985 if existing Ministry of Education funding continues at the present level and if the board permits for annual salary increases based on previous averages—and add no more program or staff.

can be described as reasonable, responsible and professional, there is no doubt that the pre-occupation with negotiations and the expenditure of time, human resources and money in negotiating and implementing the collective agreements have diverted our attention from other important educational matters."

The education director's report also hinted at disappointments with respect to rising expectations of the board in special education. Better programs for the gifted, early identification programs, maximum class sizes are some things the board will be expected to undertake following release of the province's revisions in special education. "It seems clear also that careful planning implies the completion of a set of priorities. And it suggests that not all good things can, or will, get done."

Halton's population is growing older while it shifts from the south to the north, according to the report. The drift north is leaving behind most of the school buildings; a change which poses many problems for

planners. "Does the Board 'bus or build'? How far is too far to transport a pupil? and other questions are to be taken up in the long term plan.

Declining enrolment in Halton had implications for program, staffing, school facilities and administration. However, the director says the change in enrolment is

not the major issue in the region.
This year elementary school pupils compose 12.02 per cent of the population of 240,248 while high schoolers amount to 8.89 per cent. By 1984 the population is predicted to reach 266,000 and the percentages for school children is expected to slip to 10.45 in elementary and 6.59 for secondary.

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WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

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Environmental guidelines are sent

Halton Regional Council will be asked to pass a set of environmental guidelines which will effect future development plans within the region.

Halton Region is currently without the Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines recommended last week by Planning Committee and it has already caused one problem.

In Georgetown, a subdivision was recently approved in the Hungry Hollow area after the OMB was forced to accept the environmental assessment report of the developer.

Although Hungry Hollow has been declared an environmentally sensitive area by the region, the OMB wrote in its decision that "to date no specific guidelines have been developed by the region for such a study and therefore, the board will accept exhibit

No. 17 (the proponents environmental assessment) as an environmental study."

The guidelines which go to Regional Council today were prepared with suggestions from

the province, Halton Region Conservation Authority and several other agencies.

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