

# THE BABYSITTER COURSE



All you need to know. Milton Public Library will again present a course for teenage babysitters, dealing with child safety and care and tips on handling youngsters.

## Special session...

# How to react to emergencies object of babysitting course

By Linda Kirby  
A young teenager sits down to watch television.

The two children she is babysitting are tucked in bed and the youngest, a six-month-old baby is fast asleep.

Suddenly she hears the five-year-old crying and then choking on a cookie he took to bed with him.

By the time she reaches him, the youngster has coughed up the cookie himself.

But what if he hadn't?

Most babysitters are not confronted with a choking, or a child that suddenly stops breathing or a grease fire in the kitchen.

But a special program at Milton Public Library will provide babysitting teens with the knowledge to handle such situations.

The course is set on Red Cross babysitting guidelines and includes a wealth of information including pointers on bathing infants, changing, child behavior, notes on safe toys and what to do in emergency situations.

The program which is running for the second year in a row fulfills a need in the

community for properly trained sitters, according to Kathleen Petrie of the Library and a key co-ordinator of the program.

Canadian statistics show some 2,000 children under the age of 15 die from accidents every year and over a half million are injured.

Most of those accidents could have been prevented. One out of every three people, or more than 7 million Canadians are under the age of 15.

The stats continue—every 15 minutes a child is accidentally poisoned, every five minutes a child is needlessly injured.

The most dangerous ages for children are between two and three years of age and these accidents happen more frequently during the late afternoon and evening hours.

Although child safety is a major concern in the babysitting course, the program aims to offer a broader scope of child care.

The course runs seven weeks and includes a guest speaker each week beginning with Carolyn Keyworth of the V.O.N. discussing the topic of infant care.

Students are taught how to pick up and hold the infant properly, bathing procedures and the correct method of changing a child.

Feeding is also covered and tips are given on what to do when a baby cries and finding out why he is crying.

Norma Smith follows with a session on child behavior.

A former nursery school teacher, Mrs. Smith discusses pre-schooler feeding, bathing and the needs of a child in that age bracket.

A course on first aid is taught by Mrs. Edgth Wiega, chairman of first aid for Oakville Red Cross.

This includes treatment of minor injuries, what to do in the case of stopped breathing or choking, poisons and bumps and falls.

Halton Regional Police Constable Bill Riddle, youth officer for the Milton and Halton Hills area, provides students with some rules, regulations and common sense approaches to safe babysitting.

These include how to answer a telephone or the door without letting strangers know

the babysitter is alone.

Emergency measures in the case of a fire are covered by Milton fireman Harold Penso.

He also instructs students how to deal with a small kitchen grease fire (soda, and not water) and what to do if the fire is too large to handle.

Nutrition, preparation of snacks and books and games are taught by Kathleen Petrie, of the children services in Milton Public Library.

An examination follows the six sessions and students are required to achieve at least a 70 per cent standing in order to pass and receive a certificate of merit from the Red Cross.

The program is unique by the fact there are few organizations in the immediate area that offer the course specifically geared to babysitters.

Fifteen enrolled last year, but according to Miss Petrie, as many as 30 are expected for this year's session.

Applicants must be 12 years or over and boys are welcome.

The fee for the course is \$5 and classes begin Thursday May 7.

# Champion Perspective

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THIRD SECTION

## Agency needs more funds to serve our seniors

By Kelly Frank  
Halton's senior population has nearly doubled in the past five years, and at least one local agency serving the elderly community is feeling the pressure of increased demand.

Valerie O'Hara is the executive director of Halton Helping Hands. She says the government subsidized program needs more funds to serve Halton seniors.

"The elderly population in Halton is growing very rapidly," she said. "We've been below the provincial average until now but, trends indicate we're quickly surpassing that mark."

O'Hara confides that, based on statistics from the Halton District Health Council, the senior population in the region increased 42 per cent between 1976 and 1981. The number of people over the age of 65 grew even more dramatically—44 per cent. O'Hara predicts those increases aren't merely temporary.

"It's expected the senior population growth trend will continue to skyrocket. Forecasts indicate there will be a 37 per cent increase in the next five years," she said.

O'Hara's fear is that the increased demand

won't be met through available government funding.

"It's really going to put a lot of pressure on the support services for the elderly within the community. I know other services have the same fear we do."

Halton Helping Hands offers a housecleaning and home assistance program for disabled seniors. The agency's mandate is to forestall costly institutionalization. However, the program may be reaching full capacity.

"I really don't know what the future holds for us. Usually, we get four new clients a month. But, from December to mid-

February we had 38 new people come on. The demand is continuing to increase at double the normal growth rate," she said.

O'Hara recently appealed to Halton Regional Council to increase by \$6,000 its already inflated 1981 budget of more than \$40,000. The agency was refused; council has its own budgeting restrictions to honor.

"Halton region has always been very supportive of our cause. They know it's far more humane and less costly to supply support services to keep people out of institutions. But, we were

told they couldn't meet our increased demand," said O'Hara.

And while O'Hara is concerned about the agency's financial straits, she is however grateful. Grateful for the monetary support Halton Helping Hands enjoys as a member of the United Way which provides the agency with most of its funding.

O'Hara plans to approach the province to take up the financial slack to upkeep operations. Some monies are recovered from clients but, O'Hara feels it isn't fair to demand they pay the whole price.

"These people are on a fixed income. You try to live on their pensions," she defended.

O'Hara feels it is discriminatory to make seniors pay "every last cent" at the end of the month for a service that is necessary. She warns that people using her home cleaning program will remain clients as long as they can remain independent.

"There's no end to the cost. How can they be told to do without a few little extras to pay for this service? Why shouldn't they be able to eat out at a restaurant every once in a while, or have the spending money to buy their grandchildren presents?" she contests.

O'Hara adds that some clients pay a portion of the homecleaning costs, "as much as they can comfortably afford." And she stresses that the service is carefully monitored so that it's not abused.

"While our philosophy is to help disabled people to continue living in their homes, we're careful not to help them too much. Our staff only does what they can't do."

O'Hara confides that most of her clients are wheelchair-ridden. However, she says most of them help do chores along with the agency worker.

"They want to help along, dusting and cleaning anything that's within their reach," she said. O'Hara says she welcomes the prospect of a chronic home care program in Halton. However, she fears it may increase the already overwhelming burden the agency faces.

"We really don't know what to expect. I've been told the problem will get worse when the region introduces home care because authorities will be identifying more people in the community to put on our lists that would have been prime candidates for institutions."



Learning to help. Halton's senior citizens' population has doubled during the past five years, and more and more seniors are making the effort to attend special functions designed for them. At one such event held

recently at General Wolfe High School, Cathy May receives a corsage from Helen Watson and Kim Dicaire served her tea. A mid-day reception was held.

## Farmers urged to back study



Support for sludge. Halton Ag Rep Henry Stanley told a meeting of the Halton Federation of Agriculture five test fields are being studied with regard to sludge being used as a fertilizer. Farmers have been urged to back a new sludge report and pressure the region to adopt it.

Halton farmers have been urged to act as a pressure group and convince Halton Region to change its policy on using sludge as a farm fertilizer and to accept a more efficient method as outlined in a report specially prepared on the subject.

Glen Pearce, representing Envirosearch Limited, the consulting firm which did the sludge management study for Halton Region, told the Halton Federation of Agriculture sludge can be a great benefit to agriculturalists, but only if it is done efficiently and conscientiously.

There are currently about 13,000 hectares of class one and class two farm land in Halton where sludge can be used. There are also about 11,000 hectares of class three lands which can be used but only with

very strict controls. Although this may sound like a lot of land, farm fields, Mr. Pearce said, can only take so much. Usually one full dose lasts for about five years.

Halton produces about 95,000 gallons of sludge daily. Of this there is about 800 kilograms of usable nitrogen and about 1,800 kilograms of usable phosphorus. More simply stated, 100 gallons of fertilizer quality sludge contains about one kilogram of nitrogen and two kilograms of phosphorus.

Therefore, Mr. Pearce said this daily amount is equivalent to about \$1,300 in the nutrient chemicals per day on the market. But it also means a lot of sludge has to be used to get enough of the chemical crops need to grow. To that end, Envirosearch has made a num-

ber of revolutionary recommendations to Halton Region, and one Mr. Pearce said the farmers should be pushing for.

Some of these recommendations include storing sludge in sealed tanks until it can be used; using spreader trucks with floatation tires that do not rut the field; and using pressure vacuum spreader guns to make sure the spread is uniform.

But foremost is the recommendation Halton should be in charge of all sludge testing, monitoring, and spreading with the Ministry of the Environment in an over-seeing capacity.

Mr. Pearce said if this was done it would possibly result in a very efficient program which has the potential to pay for itself.

Expertise needed. Rather than lose the expertise of Halton's rapidly growing seniors' population, Valerie O'Hara of Halton Helping Hands suggests they can serve as valuable volunteers. Helping her at her agency is Bill Turnbull.

## Seniors' expertise needed

By Kelly Frank  
Halton's senior population is being "lost to us," according to a local agency working closely with elderly people in the community.

Valerie O'Hara of Halton Helping Hands, sees local seniors as a valuable untapped resource.

"It seems to me our seniors are our most valuable resource. But we aren't utilizing their skills and knowledge," was her comment.

It's her view that seniors need to be re-integrated into the community. She feels it would help seniors remain active and productive.

"In European countries the elderly are

revered. In North America, it's a 'no-no' to get old. What's to be ashamed of? Every year we gain new knowledge, new experiences," she said.

O'Hara is working now with local school boards and college officials to see if a program can be developed to use seniors as resource people: history class lecturers, tutors, or companions for troubled teens. But, O'Hara says, while efforts are being made to integrate seniors in special education programs, "no one seems to have the time to properly tackle the problem".

O'Hara sees a fundamental problem in motivating seniors. She fears the senior

population has become isolated—"Once they reach the age of 65 they feel they are no longer contributing members of the community." She says if seniors are content to sit at home and knit, or watch TV, that's fine. But, she says many aren't happy with that lifestyle.

"I see it in our community. Our seniors are isolated. It's frustrating. Their productivity deteriorates but, their potential still runs high," she commented.

O'Hara claims it's time to end the communication gap that withholds the knowledge-sharing of local youths and seniors. She witnessed that the combination has evident benefits through in-

teraction of her student volunteers and clients.

"They really enjoy one another. The kids begin to realize that old people aren't senile. They're fascinating to talk to. They enjoy one another. They can learn from one another," she stressed.

And, O'Hara feels there's room for Senior co-operation in Halton school rooms.

"It could be part of a special education program. Students with special needs could be assisted by the seniors in an environment where the teacher can't offer the same attention."

O'Hara feels Halton's seniors offer many areas of expertise and skills but, nobody's going after this valuable resource.