



Champion COMMUNITY Page

Pups need some homes for a while

Ever thought about becoming a foster parent for a puppy? The Lions Foundation of Canada, which trains guide dogs for the blind, needs volunteers in its Foster Puppy Program.

Selected households provide homes for puppies so they learn proper house manners and basic obedience and are socialized and exposed to many different situations, experiences and people.

"Foster homes are very important in the early development and training of dog guides," said Leigh Wagland of the Lions Foundation.

Assessments at four, six and 10 months of age evaluate the progress of the puppies. When the puppies are between 10 and 14 months of age, they are recalled for training with blind and deaf people, and those physically and medically disabled.

"Dog guides are provided at no cost to these people," Ms Wagland said. "The dogs greatly improve the quality of life for those who become dog guide handlers."

A renovated school, located at the corner of Rebecca and Kerr streets in Oakville, houses the Lions Foundation and its work for Canine Vision Canada, Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada and Special Skills Dogs of Canada.

Dogs are assessed and assigned to one of the three programs for six to eight months of training.

Foster families are provided with dog food donated by Ralston Purina Canada and the foundation covers routine medical and veterinary expenses, Ms Wagland said.

All puppies are neutered at eight to nine weeks of age prior to placement.

Upon successful completion of the training program, families are invited to graduation and given a photograph of the graduating team.

To participate in the Foster Puppy Program, call 842-2891.

A catch up clinic will be on tonight for hepatitis shots

There are still some students in Halton who are only partly immunized against hepatitis B, and Halton Region's health department wants to do something about it.

It takes three shots of the vaccine to be fully protected from the virus yet many students who participated in a 1996 immunization program haven't had all three.

"We think it's great that 78 per cent of the students who took advantage of the program completed the series," said Mary Anne Carson, manager of the communicable disease program for Halton Region. "However, we are concerned that the others have only partial protection. We hope that these students who require a second or third shot will complete the program."

To help do that, regional health staff are holding a clinic this afternoon and evening (Tuesday Dec. 16) in the auditorium at the Halton Regional Centre in Oakville. No appointments are necessary. The clinic runs from 3 through 7 p.m. The Halton Regional Centre is on the east side of Highway 25 just north of the QEW.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

These new mothers have made friends as well as acquired some tips on parenthood in a Halton Regional Health Department program. They recently met for a Christmas party. From left are Dominique McLaren with daughter Rebecca, Carol Galioto and son Joshua and Sherry Morse with daughter Emily.

Mom says Halton baby club a good mixer for newcomers

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

A Halton Regional Health Department parenting program for new moms and dads is informative as well as fun, says a local participant.

The Calling New Parents program helps first-time parents learn about infant care and explores parenting issues in an informal setting, said Dominique McLaren, 27, of Conway Court.

"I'm new to Milton. Being at home with a new baby, I thought it was a great way to meet people. For me, it was more of a social thing. I just needed to get out of the house."

Among their peers, new parents of children aged up to six months meet every Tuesday from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at CHERISH Parent-Child Centre.

Meetings feature either a guest speaker or a public health nurse from the health department.

Participants learn about infant feeding, talk about growth and development and discuss why babies cry. They also explore safe-

ty, illness, immunization and other health concerns.

Ms McLaren started attending Calling New Parents meetings three months after giving birth to Rebecca, now six months old.

"It was excellent. You get a lot of really valuable information. The members enjoyed it so much they started getting together at their own homes."

She moved to Milton with her husband Doug from Toronto about a year ago.

While most meeting-goers have been women, men have come and are always welcome, Ms McLaren said.

And as current participants' children are getting older, new recruits are being sought.

The program is free. The next six-month series of sessions will start January 6.

The Halton Regional Health Department representative who runs the program couldn't be reached at press time.

For more information, call the Baby and Parent Line at 825-6060, ext. 7837.

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137 The Canadian Champion

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