

Grant will boost women's centre, says spokesperson

By **HOWARD MOZEL**
Special to The Champion

The \$45,000 in provincial funding received recently by the Women's Information and Support Centre of Halton is a welcome shot in the arm.

The centre, located in Oakville's Hopedale Mall, offers a wide range of services including information referral, support groups, workshops, access to computer and fax, a weekly network meeting for unemployed women, legal aid certificates and a resource library. It caters to women all across Halton.

"The money will go to help make all this happen," said Centre executive director Mary Koster. "It's wonderful. We're delighted."

The funding was part of \$850,000 announced

by Ontario Women's Issues Minister Dianne Cunningham for 19 of 30 such centres across the province.

"We're very grateful to be chosen," said Ms Koster. "The centre provides an incredible service to the women of Halton."

Those who rely on the centre would undoubtedly agree; in 1997, 93 volunteers fielded 9,255 contacts made by women, 5,104 of these for peer counseling and for information/referral.

"(The centre) has built a large team of volunteers who assist in the delivery of its important services," said Ms Cunningham. "Its wide range of services mean that women can receive assistance in becoming more financially self-sufficient. It also means that they have help in making the transition from victim to survivor."

The centre started in October, 1989 from the basement of a United Church, where it provided limited services only one day and one evening a week.

"We've come a long way since then," said Ms Koster.

The centre is now located in Suite 210 and can be reached by calling 847-5520.

In general terms, the centre starts by building self-esteem then provides a "continuum of service" through a host of programs, activities and special events in which volunteers play a crucial role.

Offered are workshops in everything from stress reduction to money management, peer counseling and a network for new and would-be entrepreneurs. Programs range from services for

abused women and job search assistance to money management.

"There are gratifying moments each and every day around here," said Ms Koster. "The volunteers get a tremendous amount of satisfaction helping the people who walk in that door."

Groups within the centre also include the Take-A-Break Club for outings and the Mature Network for women 50-plus.

On Tuesday, May 12 the centre will host the first annual Women of the Year Award at Glen Abbey Golf and Country Club from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. The keynote speaker will be Sally Armstrong, editor of Homemakers magazine.

Nominations will be accepted until Monday (Mar. 30) for those who have made significant contributions to community life in Halton.

Crime Stoppers OF HALTON

Teen shaken down outside variety store

Police in Milton seek help to track down a young man who scared a teen out of some money a couple of weeks ago.

At 9 p.m., Thursday, Mar. 19, the 16-year-old victim was at the Laurier Plaza on Laurier Avenue.

As he walked past the variety store, he was confronted by a male who asked for money.

The victim complied when the suspect made a comment that suggested it would be wise to do so.

After taking the victim's cash, the suspect was seen getting into a grey or silver compact car occupied by two other males.

The car was last seen southbound on Ontario Street.

The man sought by police was described as black and 18 to 20 years old. He was about six-foot-two with short hair and a trace of a mustache.

If you can put a name to the suspect, Crime Stoppers would be interested in your call.

If you have any information that leads to an arrest in this or any other case, you may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$1,000.

You need not give your name and your information can be taken with complete anonymity.

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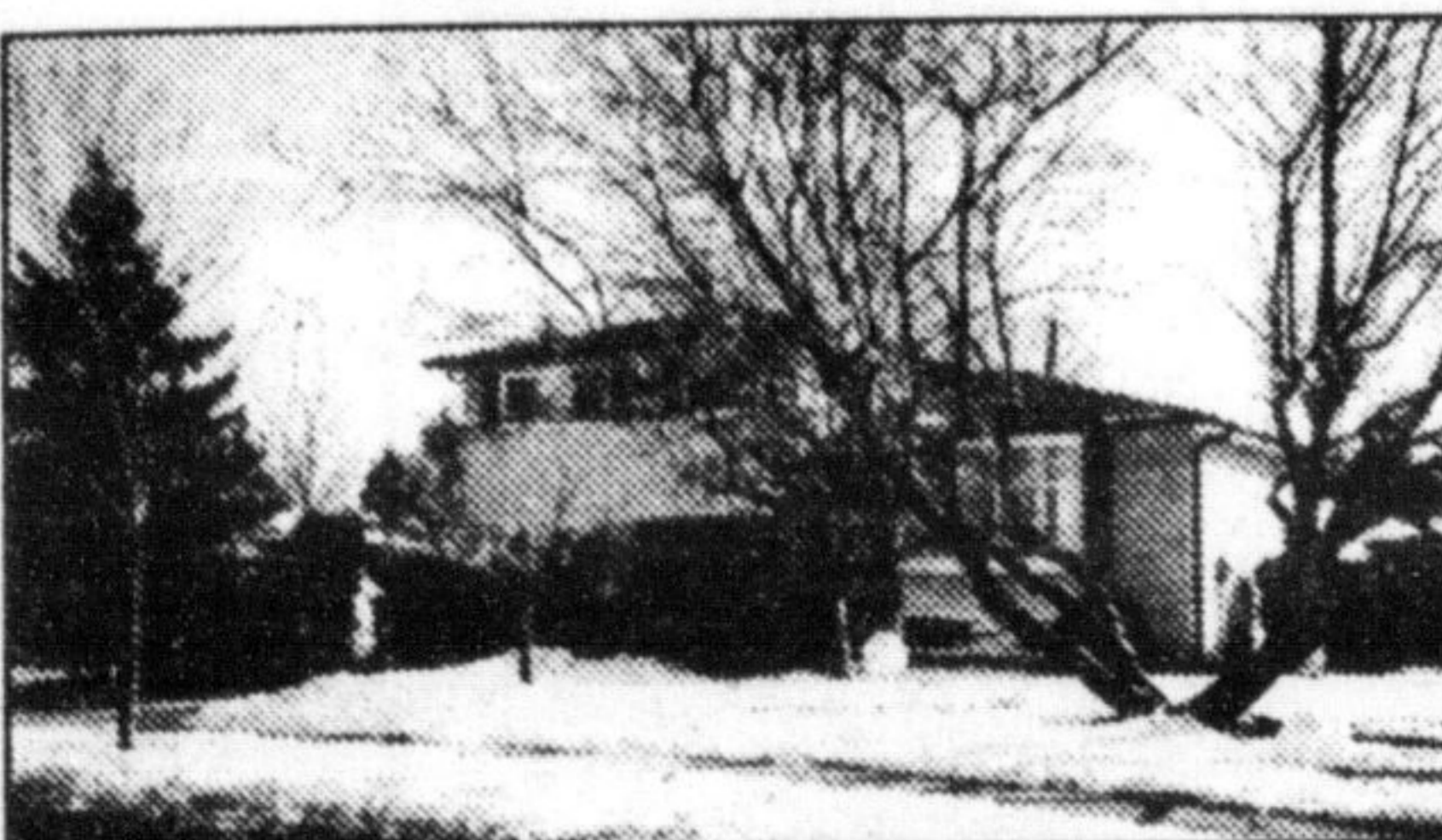
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