

Anger over layoffs shows at the board

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ly. "If it weren't for his IA, he wouldn't be where he is today," Ms Sampson said. "(The IA) understands him almost as well as I do. I can't stress enough the importance of having one person working with him that he can trust completely."

The Halton Elementary Teachers' Association also made a presentation on behalf of the IAs.

Needs the help

Burlington kindergarten teacher Hanno Weinberger told trustees IAs in his classroom help with feeding, toilet training and moving children about, as well as modeling appropriate classroom behavior and allowing special needs students to participate fully.

"These are necessary, yet time-consuming, duties which would severely impact on the time I could spend with the majority of my students if they were to be delegated solely into the realm of the classroom teacher," he said.

If special needs students must be removed from regular classrooms because of the lack of IAs, Mr. Weinberger said all students would lose out.

Support pledged

"I am here tonight to pledge my support for these invaluable classroom workers," he added. "These voiceless and powerless children are our charges and we cannot short-change their education."

Ms Gurzi told trustees the layoffs will have to mean cuts to programming for special needs students.

"Pink slips by the hundreds and program cuts by the dozens. The Halton Board of Education created a motto, 'Excellence in Education'," she noted. "Will the new Halton District School Board be able to make that same claim or will we settle for a new motto: 'Average or Basic in Education'?"

Some sympathy

After the meeting, board Chair Ethel Gardiner said she sympathizes with the concerns expressed by parents, teachers and IAs, but that the board has had its hands tied by the new provincial funding formula.

"I agree with every word that was spoken in terms of the value of IAs," she said. "But our funding is such that we have to look at a new delivery model right now."

Ms Gardiner said the board has applied for special provincial grants which might reduce the number of necessary layoffs.

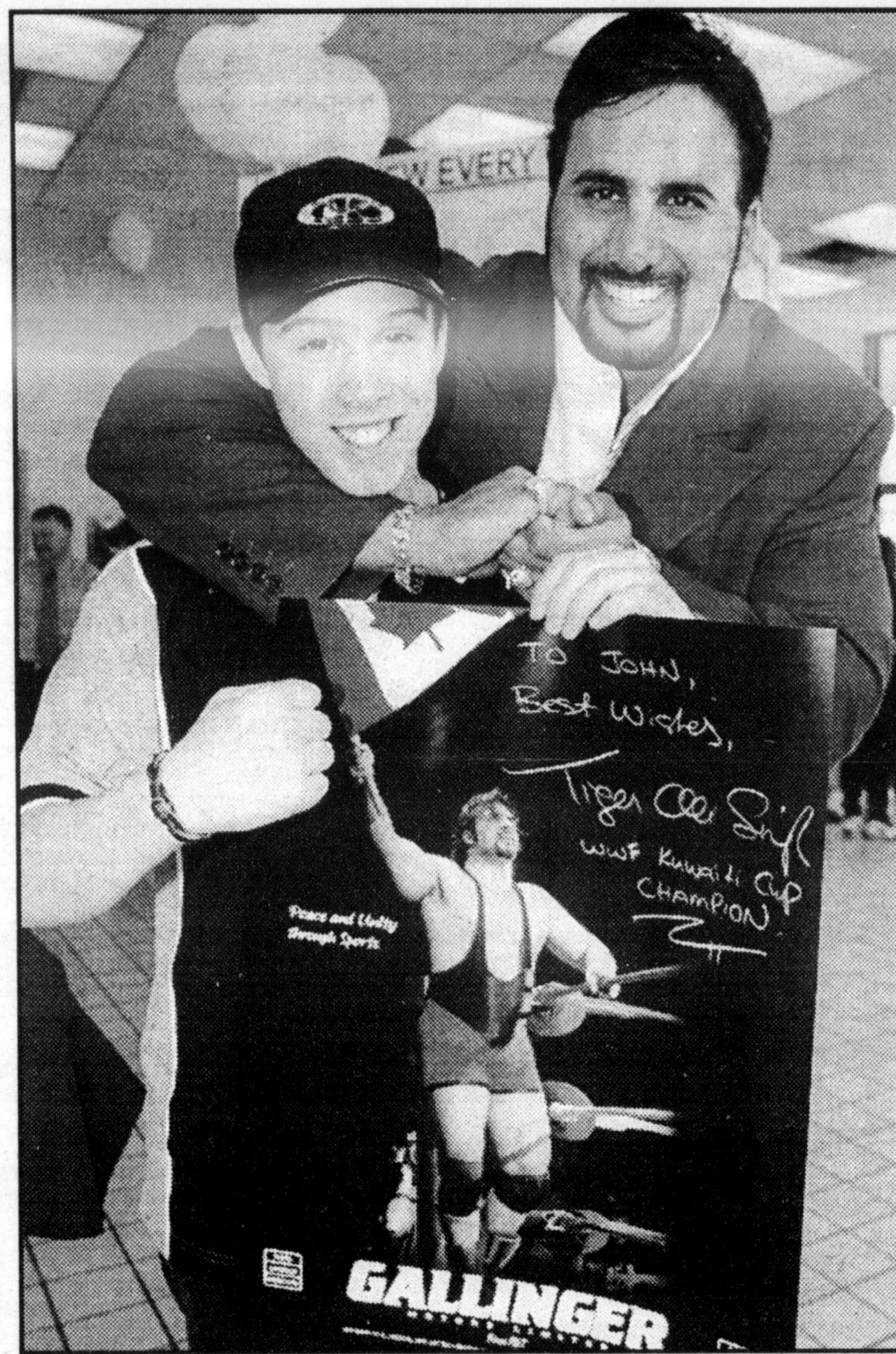


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Tiger's grip

Mick Hans (better known to WWF fans as Tiger Ali Singh) was a little more tame than he is inside the wrestling ring during a recent promotion at Gallinger Motors. Here he displays an autographed poster for local fan John Nugent.



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