

# Clock is ticking for non-profit seniors home

By KAREN SMITH  
The Champion

If ever a non-profit organization needed help from the community, it's now.

Volunteers working diligently to make the Milton Millennium Community Residences (MMCR) a reality are in the heart of phase one of their fundraising campaign.

The bottom line is that the \$5 million project initiated two years ago to build a local residence for senior citizens and others in need of assisted living requires \$400,000 by mid-January.

"We're looking for substantial amounts, I would say, particularly because of the time constraints," said volunteer Audrey Cairns.

"We're relying on the generosity of individuals and the business community."

The project's nine-member board of directors has put up \$50,000 of their own money as a down payment for a 1.4-acre piece of land to build the residence on the east side of Martin Street north of Mill Street, Ms Cairns said.

The remaining \$400,000 for the property — the former land-



mark site of the Supersweet mill — must be generated or the deposit will be lost and the project will fold.

### Serious concern

"We're really concerned that we might not (raise the necessary funds)," she said. "There's a lot of competition going on for peo-

ple's dollars. But we believe this is something that's pretty essential."

Up to 300 volunteers are being recruited to complete the fundraising network. They will personally contact residents, service clubs, church congregations and businesses.

### Need commitment

"Initially we will seek commitments for gifts and donations to be made by year-end," said Ms Cairns, a member of the board of directors in charge of public relations.

If the non-profit project is successful, Milton's physically and cognitively frail elderly will be able to find a home in their own town, contrary to the current situation, she said.

Right now there's an immediate need for 60 spaces in an assisted living facility in Milton, according to information released by the MMCR. But while there are 861 spaces available in Halton, not one is in town.

"MMCR was conceived to correct the situation of seniors and others requiring assisted living having to leave their homes in Milton, often permanently," Ms Cairns said.

### Guaranteed occupancy

She explained the concept of assisted living is a home-like, group-living arrangement for frail elderly citizens in which a wide range of individualized assistance is available 24 hours a day from professional caregiving staff.

Residents are typically considered semi-independent, often needing assistance with many activities of daily living, but are not long-term bedridden or in need of extended acute medical care.

At the MMCR, caregiving staff would deliver assistance as needed with an emphasis on resident dignity, independence, autonomy and shared responsibility, Ms Cairns said.

An additional donation option includes the sale of up to 20 "right of guaranteed occupancy" units in amounts ranging from \$50,000 to \$65,000 each, Ms Cairns said.

Purchasers would have guaranteed occupancy plus a commensurate reduction in monthly charges, the return of money after moving out and the sale of the rights to another party.

The planned project includes 30 bed-sitting rooms and 16 single-bedroom apartments with communal dining and other amenities such as a chapel, lounge and activity rooms. The total cost per resident a month is estimated at \$1,475 for a bed-sitting room unit and \$1,575 for a one-bedroom apartment.

The building cost for the site is \$3.2 million. If all goes well, occupancy is slated for the fall, 2000.

To make a donation or for more information, contact the MMCR at 693-8592.

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