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# Champion COMMUNITY Page

## Big Sisters suffers volunteer shortage

By **KAREN SMITH**  
*The Champion*

Six young Milton girls are waiting anxiously to make new friends. "We're in dire need of Big Sisters," said Claudia Scobie, executive director of an organization in which women volunteers act as mentors for girls who could benefit from some extra attention, support and encouragement.

The Big Sisters Association of North Halton faces high demands as an increasing number of parents, schools and social service agencies turn to the organization to help enhance girls' lives.

While Little Sisters are in abundance throughout north Halton — with about a dozen on the waiting list — Big Sisters can be hard to find, Ms Scobie said.

That could be due to people's time constraints, coupled with a lack of appreciation of the benefits gained by volunteers, she said. "I don't think people realize how much fun it is," she said. "What's more rewarding than enhancing the life of a child?"

Often Little Sisters live in single-parent homes, and it's sometimes difficult for the parent to find time to give the child all the emotional support she needs.

"Her Big Sister, in many instances, eases the need through a positive, non-judgmental friendship," said Ms Scobie, who's also the organization's caseworker.

Friendship is the basis of the program, she emphasized. Big Sisters aren't meant to be substitute parents, babysitters, chauffeurs, tutors or Santa Claus.

The program shouldn't break the Big Sisters' pocket books either, she said. Volunteers are encouraged to plan low-cost or free activities.

### Monthly social functions

Funded solely through the United Way, fundraisers and donations, the association holds free monthly social functions such as swimming, hiking and picnics.

The organization also sends Little Sisters to camp for a week each summer. "Numbers depend on how much money we have raised throughout the year," Ms Scobie said.

Currently 28 women ranging in age from 20 to 50 years are matched with north Halton girls aged from 5 to 16 years, Ms Scobie said. Big Sisters must be at least 19 years old.

"I would like to see women over 50 get involved as a Big Sister," she said. "I think they have so much to offer a child."

An extensive screening process is conducted with all potential Big and Little Sisters to ensure that the best possible match is made. This includes personal reference and police checks. Agency members then provide orientation and ongoing support.

After matches are made, a caseworker stays in touch with the Big Sisters on a regular basis to see how the friendship is progressing.

Big Sisters see their Little Sisters for a few hours a minimum of three times a month. The first three months is a trial period and if all goes well, the commitment is a year. But because many matches lead to strong ties, relationships often continue for several years, Ms Scobie said.

"We are in desperate need of Big Sisters in north Halton," Ms Scobie said. "Twelve children are waiting to find a friend."

To get involved, contact Ms Scobie at 854-9953.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Rebecca (left) and Louise make a good pair with Big Sisters of North Halton. The organization is in dire need of volunteers.

## Shatner to speak at Sheridan

Film and television icon William Shatner heads an impressive list of guest speakers scheduled to address Sheridan College graduates at the 1999 convocation ceremonies on June 23-25 at the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga.

Mr. Shatner will address graduates from the School of Animation, Arts and Design this Thursday (June 24) at 7:30 p.m. and will also be presented with an honorary diploma and adjunct professorship at that time.

Mr. Shatner's acting career spans four decades and includes some of the defining moments in television history — notably the role of James T. Kirk, captain of the Starship Enterprise. A prolific writer, director, producer, and businessman, Mr. Shatner will be honoured for his contribu-

tion to the arts, and to the animation industry in particular through his role as chief executive officer of C.O.R.E. Digital Pictures, a Toronto-based, digital, visual effects company founded by Sheridan graduates.

But Mr. Shatner is not the only high-profile individual who will speak to Sheridan graduates.

Barbara Turnbull will address the students from the School of Science and Technology, School of Computing and Information Management on Friday, June 25 at 3 p.m. Ms Turnbull, a reporter for the Toronto Star, is a university graduate who often writes about science, technology and justice issues. She was the subject of intense media coverage when she was shot in 1983 during a robbery at the conve-

nience store where she worked, which left her a quadriplegic. 'Looking in the Mirror,' her candid and provocative first book, revisits the incident and assesses how it has helped shape her life.

On Thursday, June 24 at 2 p.m. Gwen Boniface, commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police and one of only three female police chiefs in Canada, will speak to graduates of the School of Community and Liberal Studies, Justice and Access Programs.

John Huether, executive director of the Peel Children's Aid Society and well-known advocate for children's services, will address students in the School of Community and Liberal Studies, Community Services Programs on Wednesday, June 23 at 2 p.m.

### Cableworks 14 Programming Schedule — June 22nd - 28th, 1999

Tuesday, June 22nd	Wednesday, June 23rd	Thursday, June 24th	Monday, June 28th
5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In!	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In!	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In!	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In!
6:00pm Seniors Showcase	6:00pm Cable in the Classroom	6:00pm Internet 101	6:00pm Hands Up Puppeteers
7:00pm Money Week	7:00pm Swap Talk - Live	7:00pm The Issue Is...	7:00pm Living on the Edge
8:00pm Halton Hills Council - June 21st	8:00pm Classics Against Cancer	8:00pm Halton Regional Council - June 23rd	8:00pm SportsZONE Live

Feature of the week: Season Finale of SportsZONE Live — Monday, 8pm

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