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Champion COMMUNITY Page

Job a long distance love affair for Wright

By **WILMA BLOKHUIS**
 Special to The Champion

Marion Wright does a lot of commuting to cottage country these days — it's part of her job.

Since the end of February, she's been the executive director of not only the Canadian Mental Health Association — CMHA Halton in Milton, but also the Grey-Bruce branch in Owen Sound. She is at either location on alternating weeks. Each trip takes her three hours — one way.

It's all part of a restructuring to merge CMHA branches, with Halton and Grey-Bruce leading the way.

"I love it," she says, "I have a cabin in God's country."

Ms Wright says she can combine the best of what an urban and rural CMHA branch can offer. "In Grey-Bruce, transportation is the key issue."

While CMHA-Halton has regional offices in Oakville, Burlington and Acton, Grey-Bruce has set up regional teams with four partner agencies in Wiarton, Walkerton, Markdale and Owen Sound.

Cottage country bonus

"The programs at both branches benefit from a shared executive director," explains Ms Wright, adding she isn't the only one making regular trips to Owen Sound. "We also have staff exchanges, and they just love it."

The Halton staff get a chance to enjoy cottage country; the Grey-Bruce staff have the opportunity to experience urban settings. "We'll be holding a joint retreat for all of our staff in July." CMHA-Halton employs 21 staff while Grey-Bruce has 14.

The restructuring of the CMHA branches is in line with the Ontario Ministry of Social Services' decentralization of services into regions. "The CMHA has already been partnering services with local agencies," said Ms Wright.

"The spiritual partnership has been helpful to many of our participants. We found that the evening meal program was being attended by people who could benefit from our Oasis drop-in program."

CMHA-Halton is also partnering services with ADAPT, STRIDE (formerly Halton Work Programme), Oakville Re-Entry Homes, Father's House, the North Halton Mental Health Clinic and the John Howard Society.

The Grey-Bruce partners include the Grey-Bruce Health Corps, and the Bruce Peninsula Housing crisis team in Wiarton, which operates a seven-day a week distress line.

Seamless service

Ms Wright's new role is "reflective of the direction non-profit agencies are moving to provide services on a regional level, to effect consistency of services, and administrative efficiencies, versus having many small agencies each with their own administration and fundraising.

"We aim to provide seamless services, with bridges instead of gaps, with sentinels at each bridge so people don't fall into the gap."

One of her goals is to integrate people with a mental illness into the mainstream. Ms Wright has already implemented this at CMHA-Halton.

"About 41 per cent of our staff are people with mental health problems. We started this integration since our reorganization last year. They work in teams and there's no way you can figure out



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Marion Wright commutes more than most as executive director for two branches of the Canadian Mental Health Association. She works both out of Milton and Owen Sound.

who the consumers are."

In 1998, CMHA-Halton was launched as a central agency with regional storefront offices.

"We have to 'work smarter,'" says Ms Wright. "With a shared executive director, the agencies can communicate better." Both Halton and Grey-Bruce have separate boards.

Ms Wright has always been part of the team, carrying a case-load and providing face-to-face service delivery.

A similar merger exists between the Wellington and Waterloo branches, however they are located side by side.

"I expect to see more joint provision of services among local CMHAs in the future," concludes Ms Wright.

Steam Era broadens its offerings

In response to the changing profile of visitors to Steam-Era, this year's show will offer more entertainment all day, every day to appeal to young families, say organizers.

The focus on attracting younger audiences that began last year has proven successful, said Brad Clements, director of the Ontario Steam and Antique Preservers Association, which runs Steam-Era.

"The 'Second Stage' was added last year and proved very popular, drawing parents

and grandparents with young children for games and contests like kids' tractor pulls, fashion shows, musical performances, craft demonstrations and more appeal to all ages."

The new focus augments the busy daily entertainment schedule that has drawn visitors from hundreds of miles away for the past 38 annual Steam-Era shows.

Twice daily parades of antique tractors chug their way past the grandstand and around the quarter-mile track at the Milton

Fair Grounds.

Tractor pull contests roar on Saturday and Monday mornings of Labour Day weekend. Demonstrations of threshing and a working sawmill and shingle mill continue throughout the day.

All the while, visitors young and old get to examine hundreds of working antique tractors up to 90 years old, gas engines and dozens of classic cars.

This year, the annual Labour Day week-
 • see **YOUNGER** on page 9

Cableworks 14 Programming Schedule — July 13th - July 19th, 1999

Tuesday, July 13th	Wednesday, July 14th	Thursday, July 15th	Monday, July 19th
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 The Garden Tour	6:00pm SportsZONE Game of the Week	6:00pm The Issue Is ...	6:00pm Cable In The Classroom
7:00pm The Issue Is ...	7:00pm The Garden Tour	7:00pm Internet 101	7:00pm SportsZONE Game of the Week
8:00pm Halton Region Council - July 12th	8:00pm Milton Council - July 5th	8:00pm Halton Region Council - July 14th	

Feature of the week: Jr. B Lacrosse Milton vs Wallaceburg - Wed. 6 p.m.

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