

**Official opening**

**Unit said to be one of the best around**

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"What we've been talking about in the government is bringing the services closer to home and ensuring that the services delivered respond to the specific needs of the people in the province," said Ms Witmer.

Ms Witmer credited Oakville MPP Gary Carr with being a "strong advocate" for health care funding in his constituency.

Afterward, Mr. Carr admitted to being outspoken on health care issues and pushing for funding in this area.

"There have been major changes in the health structure right across the province and what I've been doing is working to ensure that during that process we have the funds available to provide the various services for the people of Oakville," said Mr. Carr.

**Miniature rock garden marks opening**

Services for people like Jean Caine, who participated in the unusual opening ceremony with Ms Witmer and hospital staff. Rather than have the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony, Ms Mihok had participants place a decorated stone representing one of the 14 steps on the road to independence in a miniature rock garden to mark the grand opening.

Ms Caine, currently an out-patient in the Step Up Program, suffered a stroke three months ago and said she chose to place the stone entitled 'Dressing' because relearning that skill meant a lot to her.

**State-of-the-art facilities**

Dr. Greg Thomson, medical program leader, called the program that played such a large role in Caine's recovery "one of the best around" because of its state-of-the-art facilities and the multi-disciplinary team running it.

The team is comprised of nurses, physicians, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, discharge planners and recreation therapists all working in concert with one another.

Ms Witmer pledged to continue to work in cooperation with the hospital to meet the area's health care needs.

Another \$2 million will be added to next year's base budget to bring the total amount in funding for the new unit to \$4 million.

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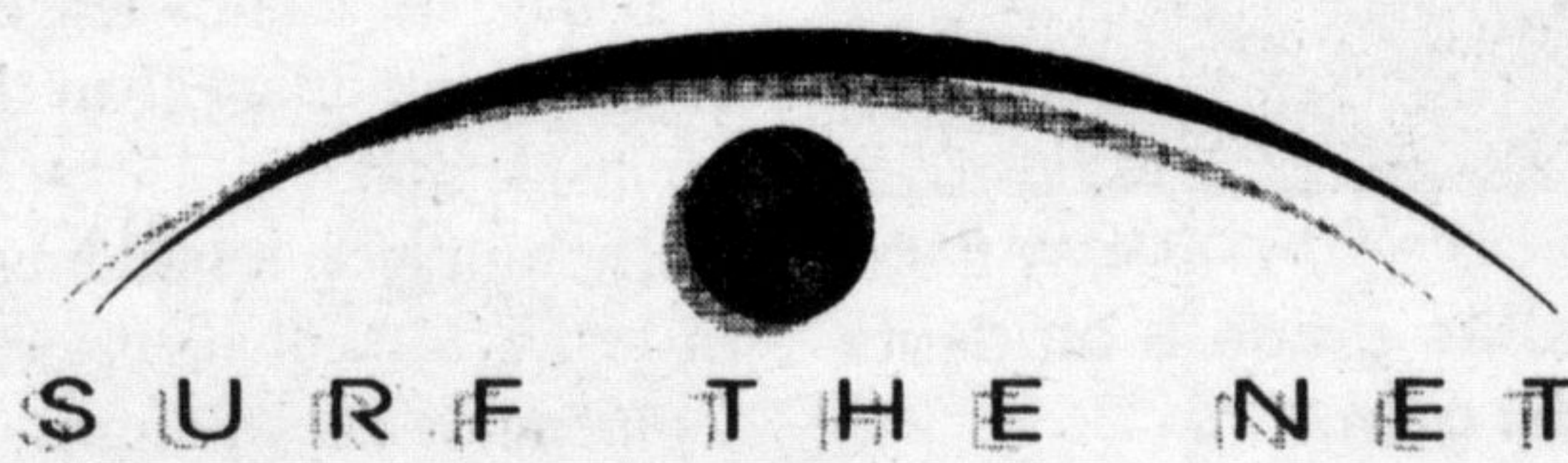
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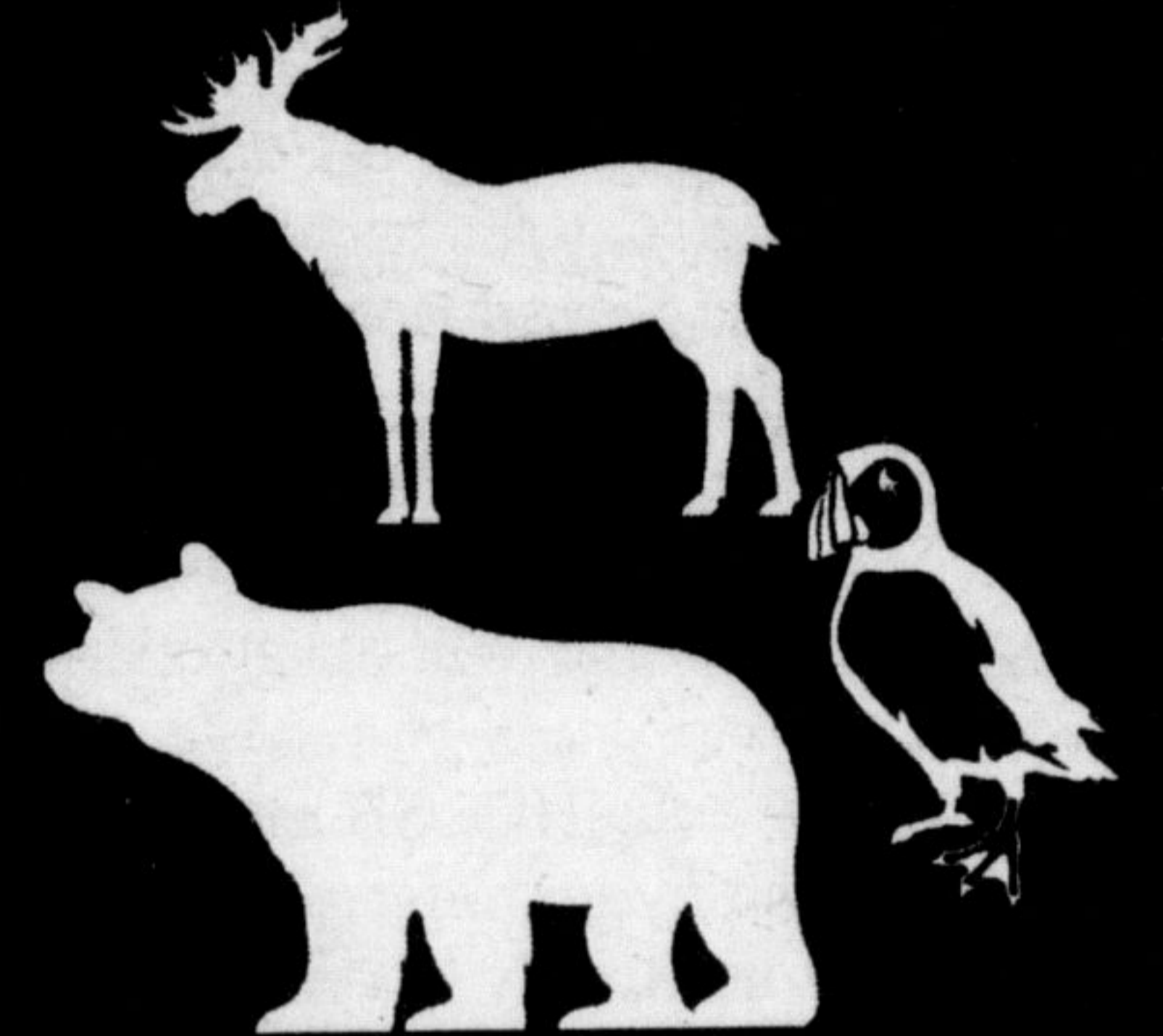
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