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Champion COMMUNITY Page

✓ New Holy Rosary School more user-friendly

By IRENE GENTLE
 The Champion

After a full year of construction, the new \$6 million Holy Rosary elementary school is complete.

Its triumphant opening is marred only by continuing construction on what will soon be its parking lot.

But there are goodies for everyone in the new building that holds 485 students attending junior kindergarten to grade 8.

Teachers, for example, have their own staff work room for the first time in 45 years.

And wheelchair accessibility is spread throughout the building.

This time around, students even have a real gym, equipped with rubberized floors and a ceiling high enough to allow interference-free activities.

"The last gym had a very low ceiling," said principal Rick MacDonald. "If you played volleyball in it the ball would bounce off the roof."

There is even a sweet surprise for the Halton District Catholic School Board (HDCSB).

The new building boasts a heating and cooling system that not only holds the temperature at a steady 70 degrees, but also introduces energy-saving measures that will slash operating costs by 25 per cent.

That will save the HDCSB more than \$6,000 a year in heat and hydro bills.

The new Holy Rosary has risen out of the dust and ashes of the former school, which was torpedoed last year.

Built in 1954, it was a relic compared to the structure currently standing in its stead.

Now with the construction all but complete, they are playing catch up inside the school.

That means plugging in the extras, like connecting the wires for Holy Rosary's first ever specially-designated computer lab.

But what students tend to notice are the lockers that line the walls — unlocked, since the school's motto preaches respect.

And respecting each other's belongings means not needing to lock them away, said Mr. MacDonald.

Boundary changes have pruned enrolment slightly, down from 515 last year.

The school is built on a flood plain, so there is just no room for portables.

That means the student population will likely always hover around the 500 mark no matter how much Milton balloons in the future, said Mr. MacDonald.

But the new classrooms are airy and spacious, surrounding classes that, this year at least, tend to top out at 25 students.

Just getting around was difficult in the old school which, though not exactly falling apart, suffered from leaky roofs and other ailments.

A steady stream of additions tacked on over the years created a disjointed atmosphere.

"It served the community well over the years but it was dysfunctional. There were four or five levels to it," said Mr. MacDonald.

"I think the new building is a lot more user-friendly for students and parents, once we get all the construction complete."

Building a new structure had been a high pri-

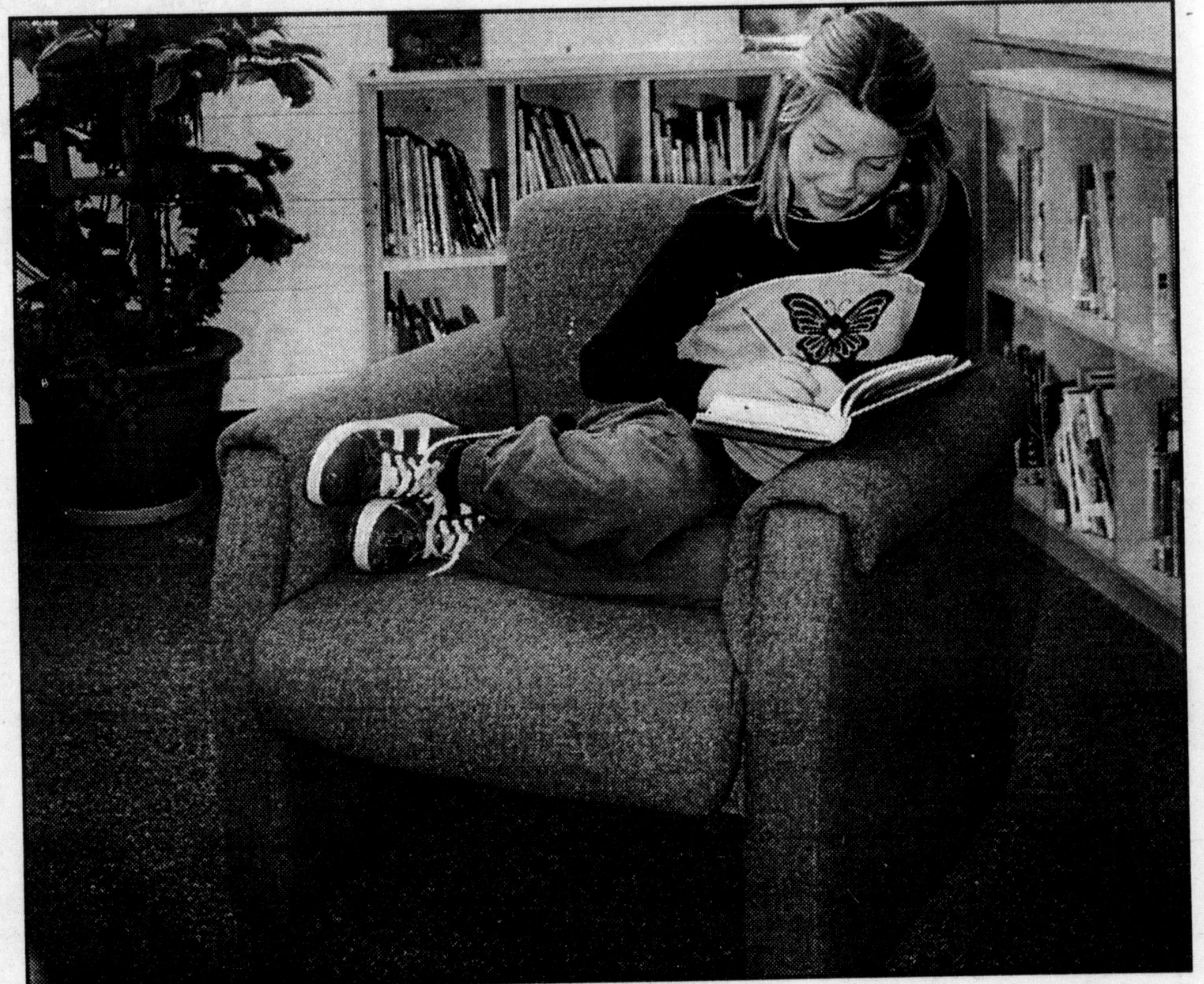


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Grade 4 student Alannah Campbell, 9, takes advantage of the new library at the freshly-constructed Holy Rosary School.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Rubberized floors and high ceilings are just some of the benefits grade 6 students Peter Borcsok (left) and Cameron Smith enjoy in Holy Rosary's new gym.

ority on the school council list for about a decade before the first shovel hit the dirt.

Their lobbying finally paid off, and the school is built mostly on Ministry of Education money.

Inside the school, little extras abound that were paid out of the pocket of the council.

The small benches scattered around are courtesy of the council. So is the new gold and red icon, the Virgin and baby Jesus, unveiled at a ceremony last week and now hanging proudly in the school lobby.

Though Mr. MacDonald only became principal of Holy Rosary last year, there is a history between them.

He arrived in its halls 19 years before as a neophyte teacher.

In the first flush of his career, he barely noticed the buildings deficiencies, he recalled.

"Back then, you took what you got," he said. "You were just excited about doing the job."

Today, he acknowledges that the structure is still less important than the teaching that goes on inside of it.

But toiling in a building that doesn't languish in leaks, lack of natural light and extremes of temperature doesn't hurt.

"If you are working in an environment that is conducive to learning, I think it can only be a positive experience for the students," he said.

It works for Devan O'Connor, a grade 2 student who cheerfully confesses that she's just 6, will not in fact turn 7 for months and months, which turns out to be December 26.

"I like the new lockers," said Devan. "I've never had a locker in my life before."

She's also a fan of the new gym, from which she had been wrested only moments before in order to give her estimation of the new school.

"Last year's gym just had wooden floors. This one is rubberized," she said. "You could get cut really easily on the wooden floor. Now, you just get an Indian rubber burn."

Devan, she continued, is used to Indian rubber burns, since her brother gives them to her all the time.

Curtis Campbell also gives the gym a vote of confidence, along with some praise for the rest of the school.

"The gym is wicked," he said. "I feel good about it. This year it is better and funner and bigger."

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Cableworks 14 Programming Schedule — October 12th - October 18th, 1999

Tuesday, October 12th	Wednesday, October 13th	Thursday, October 14th	Sunday, October 17th	Monday, October 18th
10am, 11am, 12pm	10am, 11am, 12pm	10am, 11am, 12pm	4pm, 5pm, 6:30pm	10am, 11am, 12pm
Yesterday's Plugged In!	Yesterday's Plugged In!	Yesterday's Plugged In!	Plugged In - Week in Review	Yesterday's Plugged In!
5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm	4:30pm	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm
Plugged In!	Plugged In!	Plugged In!	The Local Scene	Plugged In!
6:00pm	6:00pm	6:00pm	Seniors Showcase	6:00pm
Seniors Showcase	Cable in the Classroom	The Local Scene	7:00pm	The Art of Watercolour
7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	The issue is...	7:00pm
Money Week	Swap Talk	Halton Regional Council	8:00pm	Living On the Edge
Halton Hills Council	Milton Council			8:00pm
8:00pm	8:00pm			SportsZONE Live

Feature of the week: Swap Talk has returned! Watch for Edge Live Wednesday, 7 pm

T a k i n g y o u r c a b l e f u r t h e r