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Week of the Child

Investment in kids pays off later

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

If children are the future, then Halton Region's child services department knows it's never too soon to start preparing for healthy ones.

So it's there right from the start. "That's the investment in kids that will pay off later," said the Region's community services commissioner Adelina Urbanski.

Celebrating children will be the focus of the Ontario-wide Week of the Child October 17 to 23.

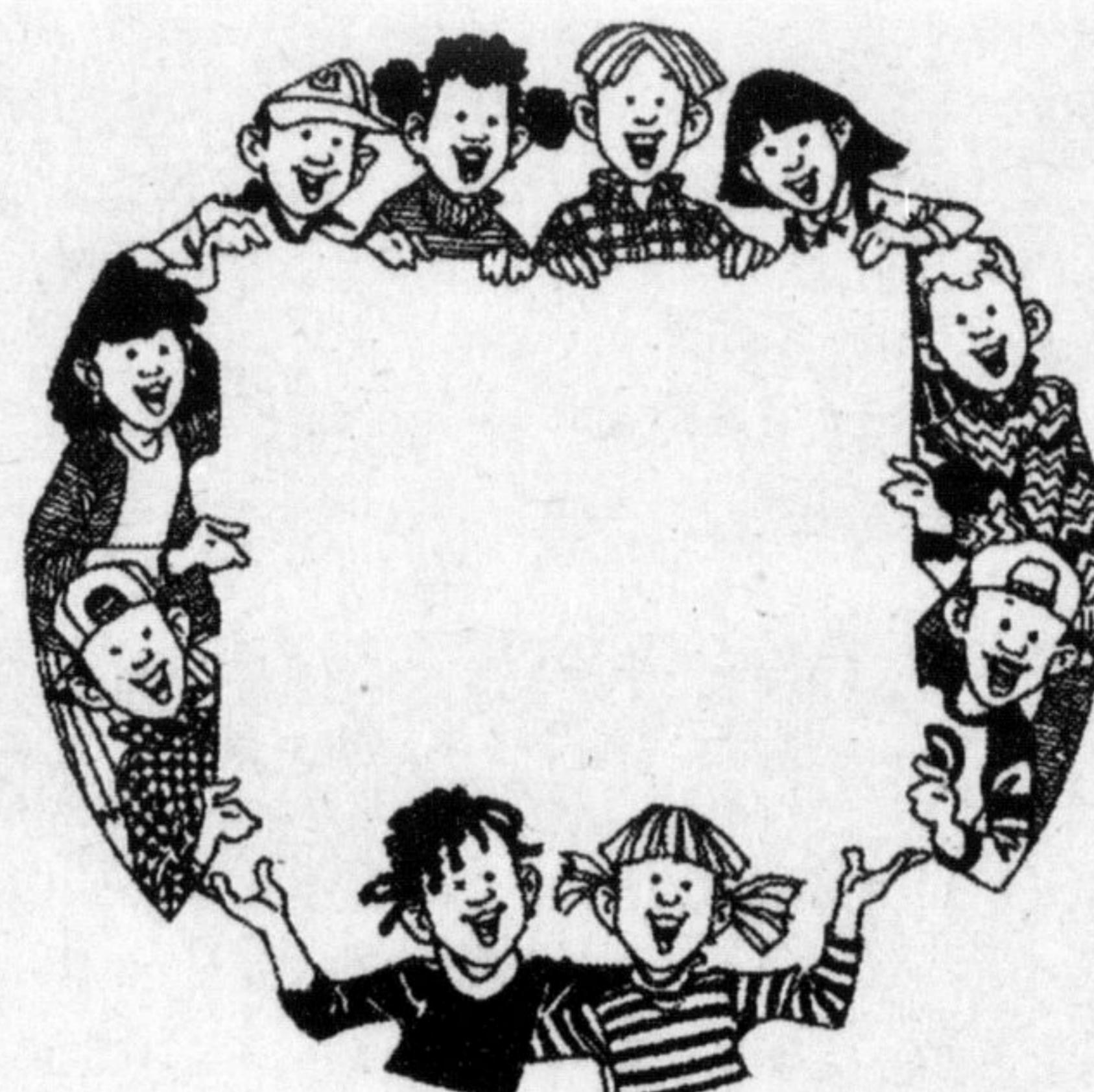
But the Region's commitment is year-round, and it starts right away, said Ms Urbanski.

Under the Region's Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program, the parents of a newborn can soon expect to be called by Regional staff within two days of their hospital discharge to ensure that everything is well.

And if it isn't, the Region plans on being there to provide the necessary support to bring things back on track.

Philosophically, the idea is that taking care of kids' needs will help them grow up to be secure, healthy adults.

And those needs are the most intense in



the early years of childhood, noted Ms Urbanski.

"Zero to six, the literature keeps reinforcing how critical those years are," she said. "In many cases it can stay with them for life."

Early experiences, which act to stimulate the brain, can actually play a role in the brain's development, said Ms Urbanski.

"It is neurological, the patterns start to form," she said. "The brain develops in those six years."

And the Region's slew of child-oriented programs are intended as a concrete strategy for helping children flourish.

Often, that means helping their families.

"What we are seeing in a lot of cases is parent depression. You want to make sure they get the medical help they need," said Ms Urbanski. "Sometimes it might be a very young mom who needs support. She may not have had a very great life herself and now she is a mom, too."

Helping the parent serves to create a better atmosphere for the child to grow and thrive in.

"We try and catch the family before it is too late and connect them to the services," said Ms Urbanski.

Sometimes assisting families can be as simple as guiding them towards quality subsidized or unsubsidized childcare.

The Region owns and operates three full-fee childcare centres, two in Oakville and one in Georgetown. Staffed by early childhood educators, these centres serve about 120 children.

"We can often take special needs kids that other centres may not be able to do," said Ms Urbanski.

In addition, the Region helps place about 1,500 children in subsidized childcare.

"If they qualify, they can go to any centre we have an agreement with, and that covers a lot of centres," she said.

Under the Region's child health program, public nurses spread the word on

• see REGION on page 10



**DATELINE DRURY
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Dateline Drury - June 18, 1999
by Candice Hugo, Sarah Hamilton, Kristyn Di Girolamo

Welcome back everyone! We'd like to invite of the community to the world of E.C. Drury High School. This year promises to be both exciting and successful. Best wishes and good luck to everyone!

Dateline Drury is returning to you this year with enthusiasm and we intend to inform the Milton Community of all the wonderful happenings at E.C. Drury High School. Let us introduce ourselves. We are Kristyn Di Girolamo, Sarah Hamilton, and Candice Hugo, three OAC students who will be delivering Dateline Drury to you weekly.

This week's report includes news about the recognition of outstanding academic achievement for the 1998-1999 year. An Honour Society evening and a Honour Roll Breakfast were held to congratulate all Honour Society students for their hard work and dedication. You make Drury proud! Drury also honoured September's student of the month. September's student was Alli Rollwagon who was selected for her wonderful attitude and excellent academic achievements. Great job Alli!

Along with Alli, all students at Drury are participating in the new TAG program. What is TAG you ask? Well, TAG stands for Teacher Advisory Group, a program which is new to our curriculum. This innovative program takes place every Wednesday for 45 minutes, during which time students and teacher advisors focus on education planning. TAG also encourages involvement in school committees, such as the Student council and the Student Athletic Society. So you can see that TAG promises to be an exciting new adventure.

With all the encouragement from TAG, the Student Government and the Student Athletic Society have been able to get off to a great start. Just yesterday the Student Athletic Society did an excellent job organizing and running this year's Oktoberefest. Congratulations to all on a successful event and a big thank you to all those students who participated.

Participation is also high at the moment in Drury athletics. This season's teams include Jr. and Sr. Boy's Volleyball, Sr. Girls Basketball, Rugby and Cross Country. We are very excited to announce that Drury now has a Jr. Girls Field Hockey team. Some of these athletes who play on these teams have dedicated their time and effort are recognized as Athletes of the Month. This month Jarrod Blinck, Laura Adamson, Aaron Vinski, Melissa Loague and Ameer May were selected. These athletes, their teammates and their coaches are looking forward to the grand opening of the new gym. Details will be revealed in our next issue!

Another busy Drury group is the music department with the concert choir and the jazz band in rehearsal. During commencement, on Friday November 5th, they will have the opportunity to show off their stuff.

Grads returning to Drury for commencement will be disappointed that they didn't have the chance to join the Safe Schools Committee. This new committee was formed this year to improve the safety in our school and community. Recently, the "Stay Alive, Don't Drink and Drive" campaign was launched to make the students aware of the seriousness of drinking and driving. The Safe Schools Committee would like to thank MADD for all their support and they would also like to thank everyone that made a donation to MADD.

As you can see, Drury is busy with many activities and events which provide such a wonderful atmosphere for everyone. There is still plenty to come, and Dateline Drury will be on top of it all!

See you next week!

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