



Champion COMMUNITY Page

Wellspring House

Serene haven for cancer patients

By HOWARD MOZEL
Special to The Champion

The first thing that strikes you upon entering Wellspring House is the light. Not light from the many elegant fixtures donated by the builders but the natural, healing sun that pours in through the many windows — illumination that's perfect for warming the spirit, says Wellspring executive director Lynda Morrison.

"It's just unbelievable what the builders have done," she said. The benefactors Ms Morrison praised include the Metrontario Group and Mattamy Homes Ltd., which donated the construction cost of the premises worth an estimated \$300,000. Countless others have also adopted the new satellite facility, says decor co-ordinator and long-time volunteer Liz Thomson.

"It has been embraced with total enthusiasm," she said. "It's difficult to ask for things but the people of both Oakville and Mississauga have been quite generous. There has been no negativity, just a lot of community sharing."

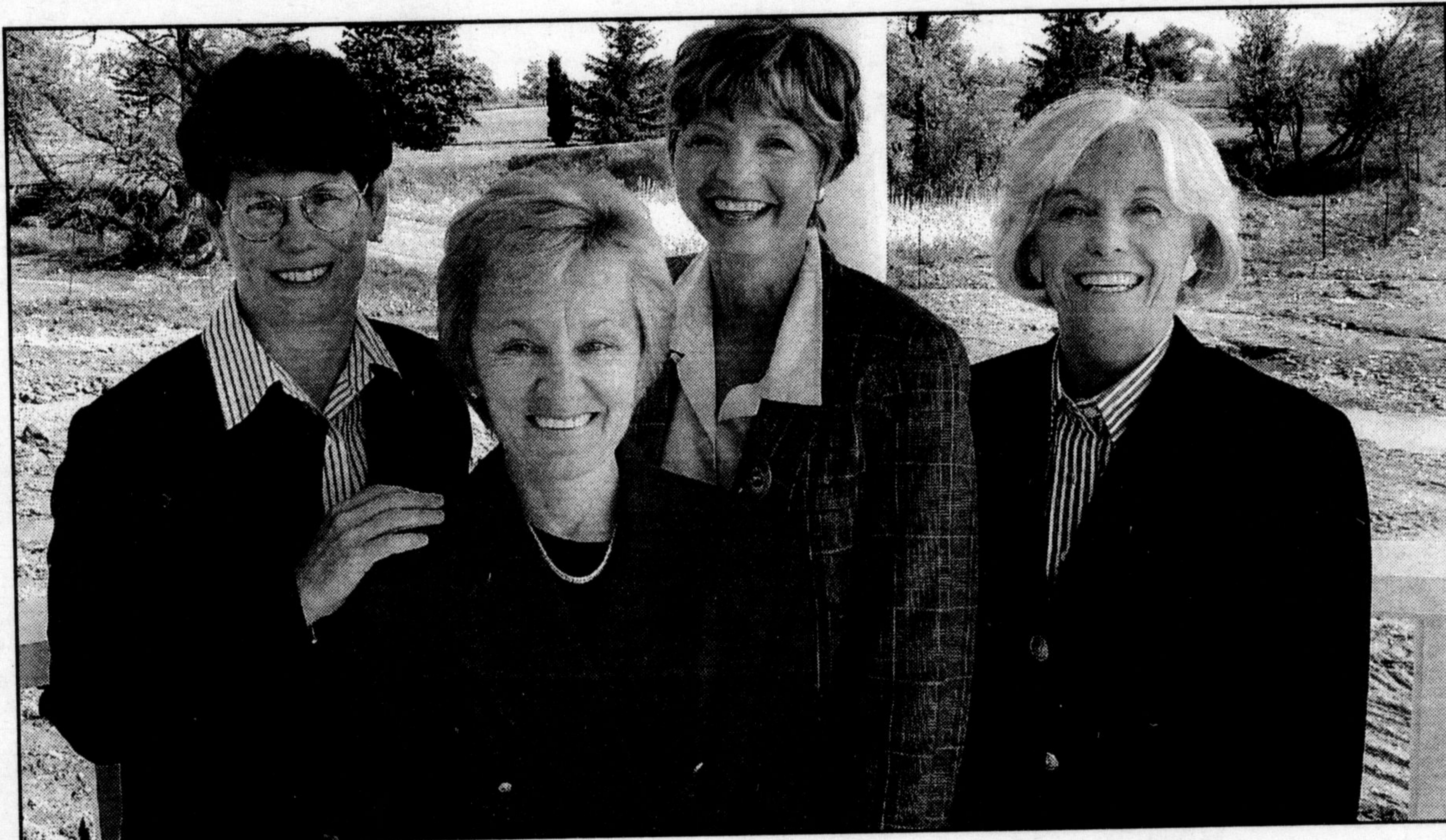
Adds Ms Morrison: "We've been unbelievably blessed. We've had more than 100 people volunteer to work in the house."

The end result of this goodwill is a facility that will serve the aims of the Wellspring Cancer Support Foundation in spades with activity areas, a library, support rooms and more.

All this will play a part in Wellspring's role as an innovative support facility slated to open shortly in Oakville's Uptown Core Park. There, cancer patients and their families will receive comfort, support, practical information and much more.

Wellspring's success rests with the high quality of its 30 support programs — all of which are predicated on the same principle of peer-to-peer counselling. This empathy goes a long way, especially for recently-diagnosed individuals. There are no medical treatments of any kind.

The main activity room — including a gas fireplace, vaulted ceiling, French doors and plenty of windows — is large enough



From left are Wellspring executive director Lynda Morrison, Director Helen Brent, Peggy Budd of Wellspring communications and Liz Thomson, long-time volunteer.

for at least 12 people to practice yoga.

Everyone is welcome to the peer support room without a referral. There people can talk and receive support from volunteers who can direct them to appropriate programs. A volunteer will always be on duty at the front reception desk during house hours.

Then there's the kitchen. "Here people can make themselves at home," said Ms Morrison, who explains that the mind and soul can take longer to heal than the body. "It can be a port in the storm."

In fact, Ms Morrison continued, patients often feel so comfortable at Wellspring that some have been known to slip into sleep.

Wellspring House also includes a library, handicapped wash-room and another upstairs support room with a commanding view of the park and the pond. There's also a second-floor art therapy room. The basement is large enough to hold meetings and any cancer-related group is welcome to use it. Although the house has two offices, both are small so that the majority of space is dedicated to fulfilling the Foundation's mandate.

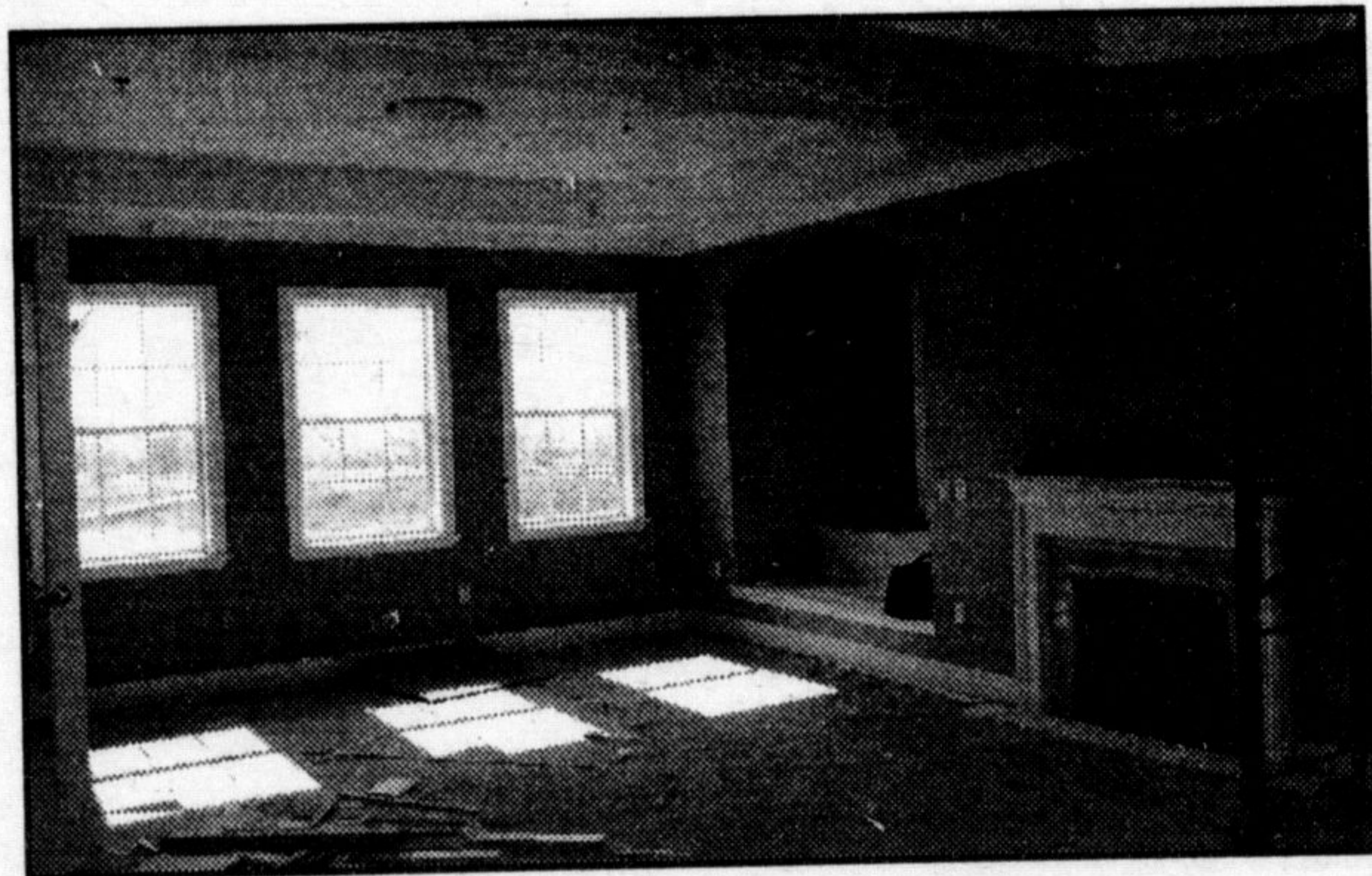
After the July long weekend, Wellspring's hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays.

Two wine and cheese receptions have been planned for all those who helped see the house through — tomorrow and June 15. The official opening is scheduled for September 21.

Wellspring was established in 1992 to help fill the void between the cancer care system and support services. It's now located in

the non-institutional setting of a coach house in downtown Toronto but usage numbers soon dictated expansion in a "community focused way," said Ms Morrison.

The programs are open to all cancer patients regardless of where they live. The Oakville site — which is associated with Credit Valley Hospital, the designated cancer treatment centre for Halton and Peel — is one of two pilot projects. The other is linked to Sunnybrook Medical Centre.



Wellspring's main activity room features a fireplace, vaulted ceiling, French doors and plenty of windows.



Wellspring's peaceful setting boasts a view of the pond.

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COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — June 6th, 2000 - June 12th, 2000

Tuesday, June 6th		Wednesday, June 7th		Thursday, June 8th		Monday, June 12th	
10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Encore	10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Encore	10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Encore	10am, 11am, Noon	Plugged In! Encore
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	The Local Scene	6:00pm	Living on The Edge
7:00pm	The Local Scene	7:00pm	Swap Talk - Live!	7:00pm	Money Week	7:00pm	The Issue Is...
8:00pm	Halton Hills Council & Municipal Awards	8:00pm	Mad Cow Disease	8:00pm	Halton Region Council	8:00pm	SportsZONE Live

Feature this week: "SportsZone Live" for weekly Live Local Sports Info - Monday, 8pm.