

Champion COMMUNITY Page

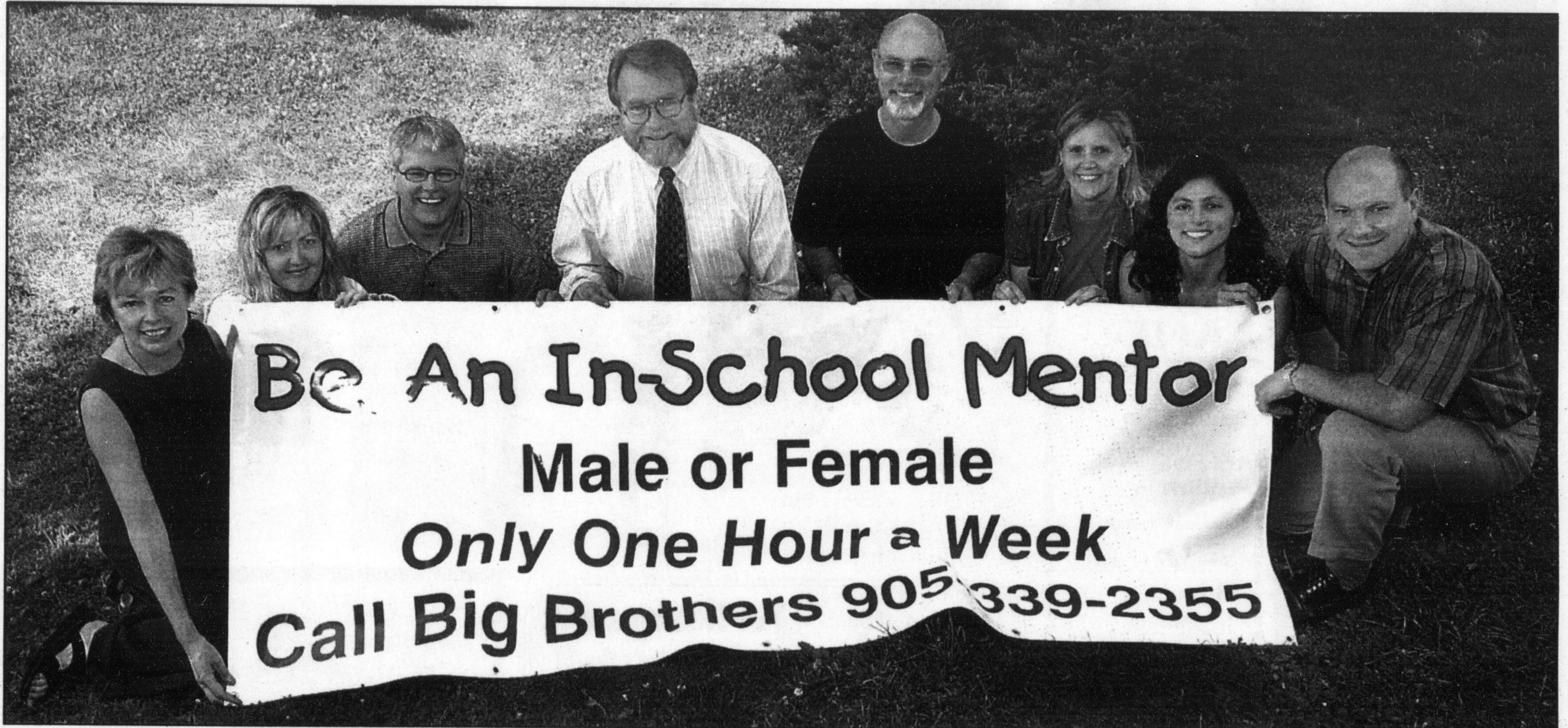


Photo by BARRIE ERSKINE

Carole Shepherd, Oakville Big Sisters co-ordinator of The Club; Lee Shepherd, caseworker for Big Brothers of Halton; Don Lawson, marketing director for Big Brothers of Burlington Hamilton-Wentworth; Gary Sadler, superintendent of education with the Halton District School Board; Larry Stevens, principal of King's Road School in Burlington; Evelyn Rea, executive director of Big Brothers of Halton; Demetra Saldaris, principal of Oakwood School in Oakville and John Susi, principal of St James School in Oakville, are looking for in-school mentors for local children.

Mentoring program to be launched in fall

By WILMA BLOKHUIS
Special to The Champion

Wanted: Fifty volunteer school mentors. Big Brothers of Halton is leading the way to launch a new pilot project in the region and in Ontario — In-School Mentoring.

The program will be offered at five Halton elementary schools — including Milton's Holy Rosary School — starting in September.

The goal is to match 50 children with the mentors, 10 at each school, who will spend one hour together each week until the end of June.

Big Brothers is working in partnership with the Oakville Big Sister Association, hence it will be open to boys and girls, and both men and women can volunteer as mentors. Big Brothers of Burlington and Hamilton-Wentworth, and

Halton's two school boards, are the other partners.

The volunteer mentors will be matched one-to-one with a child aged 6 to 12 years who has been identified by teachers as needing encouragement to learn and to build self-esteem, explains Evelyn Rea, executive director of Big Brothers of Halton.

Students and professionals aged 18 years and up who can spare one hour per week, and would be interested in mentoring a child, are invited to volunteer.

Friends, not tutors

The volunteers will act as friends, not tutors. Activities — everything must be done at school — can range from arts and crafts to reading, playing board games, cooking, sports, computers, to building projects to checking homework.

The program was developed by Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada after exploring in-school

mentoring programs in the United States, says Don Lawson, marketing director for the Big Brothers of Burlington and Hamilton-Wentworth. Big Brothers and Sisters of America has offered the program for the past decade.

"More agencies are adopting the in-school mentoring program and have found it to be a great success," says Mr. Lawson.

"It's the fastest growing mentoring program across Canada. The Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada have offered the program across the country for the past five years, but it's not yet available in Ontario. This mentoring program won't be tutor based, but a friendship and relationship-based program."

Children accepted into the program will be identified and referred by their schools. The children and volunteers will be matched according to shared interests.

"The children (in the program) will not necessarily come from single-parent homes," says Mr.

Lawson.

"Although Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations are identified as working with single-parent homes, the children accepted into the In-School Mentoring Program will be those selected by their teachers as being to benefit from the friendship of an adult, to boost the child's self-esteem.

Teachers have long been advocates of a child's self-esteem, says Gary Sadler, a superintendent with the Halton District School Board.

"It's important that kids have significant supportive adults in their life."

A similar program which offered in schools, called Friends, was discontinued two years ago, adds Mr. Sadler.

The In-School Mentoring Program will be partially funded by the United Way of Oakville and the Halton Healthy Community Fund.

For information, call Big Brothers of Halton at (905) 339-2355.

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COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — July 31st - Aug. 6th, 2001.

Tuesday, July 31st	Wednesday, Aug. 1st	Thursday, Aug. 2nd	Monday, Aug. 6th
9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Early Week Edition	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Early Week Edition	Simcoe Day - No Programming
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! Late Week Edition	
5:30pm Osler Health Connection	5:30pm Quick & Easy Ways to Healthy Eating	5:30pm The Issue Is... Money Week	
6:30pm Cable in the Classroom	6:30pm War Amps: "Sail or Jail"	6:30pm Osler Health Connection	

Feature This Week: North Halton News and Information - Every Day at 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm