



# Champion COMMUNITY Page

## Long-time Maplehurst Correctional Facility volunteer McCann, 70, sees good in everyone

By FANNIE SUNSHINE  
The Champion

**Y**olanda McCann has never been afraid to hear the metal gates lock behind her.

For the past 25 years, she has been an active volunteer at Maplehurst Correctional Facility.

"I worked for an optometrist in 1975," recalled the 70-year-old. "Maplehurst had just opened and the guards would bring in the inmates to get their eyes checked. I started talking to them (inmates) and I realized how many of them came from places out of town. I thought, 'Oh God, if my son was away someplace in jail, how would he feel.' I wished there was some way I could help them."

One week later, an ad ran in The Champion asking for volunteers for the correctional facility. Ms McCann went in for an interview and hasn't looked back.

"Maplehurst was so new, I didn't know what type of volunteer work they offered. Myself and two other ladies started a human relations group. We brought in different speakers to talk to the inmates. We had psychologists, people from Children's Aid, lawyers and people to help with resumes. They really learned a lot from it. It was very educational for the guys."

### Runs self-help program

Nowadays, Ms McCann volunteers three to four days a week at the facility, usually two hours each time. And she's also the co-ordinator of the Seven Step Program, a self-help program for inmates.

"We meet every Wednesday. It's a small group, no more than 10 to 12 inmates. We sit around a table and they talk about themselves, their childhood, their life, whatever is on their mind. We ask questions and try to help each other — we don't criticize or judge."

Sometimes the inmates would rather speak to Ms McCann privately instead of with the rest of the group.

"Some don't feel comfortable saying certain things in a group, which is understandable. I'm happy to come in and sit in a room with them and talk. Because most of the guys in the Seven Step Program are young, as an older person I feel I'm talking like a mom would to a son."

She also feels people have misconceptions about working in a jail.

"In 25 years I have never been threatened, never been talked back to and if someone says a swear word they say sorry. For some reason,



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Yolanda McCann was one of eight correctional facility volunteers recognized by the Ministry of Correctional Services Wednesday.

people are afraid of inmates. They see them as bad people. I say no one is bad, people just make bad choices."

God willing, she will continue to volunteer at Maplehurst for years to come.

"I like helping people realize their talents and potential. In our Seven Step Program, we ask the guys to name three good things about themselves. Most of the time they can't even tell you one good thing but can tell you 20 bad things."

Ms McCann was one of eight correctional facility volunteers recognized by the Ministry of Correctional Services during a ceremony Wednesday at the Bell Carin Staff Development Centre in Hamilton.

In order to be recognized, the volunteers had to be nominated and fit a certain criteria, which included contributing significantly over years of volunteer service.

"It was excellent, it was very nice," she said of

the evening.

"They gave us a plaque and pin and even had people play the bag pipes as we walked in."

Maplehurst also honoured their volunteers with a dinner at the Muddy Duck Restaurant Thursday night.

"I appreciated the thought that someone nominated me. I think it's nice for people to recognize what you're doing, but I don't do this to be recognized and I say that with all my heart."



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### COGECO 14 Programming Schedule – October 23rd - 29th, 2001.

| Tuesday, October 23rd                                  | Wednesday, October 24th                                 | Thursday, October 25th                                    | Sunday, October 28th                                     | Monday, October 29th                                   |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| 9am, 10am, 11am & Noon<br>Plugged In! - Monday Edition | 9am, 10am, 11am & Noon<br>Plugged In! - Tuesday Edition | 9am, 10am, 11am & Noon<br>Plugged In! - Wednesday Edition | 9am, 10am, 11am & Noon<br>Plugged In! - Thursday Edition | 9am, 10am, 11am & Noon<br>Plugged In! - Friday Edition |
| 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm<br>Plugged In! - Tuesday Edition     | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm<br>Plugged In! - Wednesday Edition    | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm<br>Plugged In! - Thursday Edition       | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm<br>Plugged In! - Friday Edition        | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm<br>Plugged In! - Saturday Edition    |
| 5:30pm<br>Seniors Showcase                             | 5:30pm<br>Oster Health Connection                       | 5:30pm<br>Oster Health Connection                         | 5:30pm<br>The Issue Is...                                | 5:30pm<br>The Issue Is...                              |
| 6:30pm<br>Optimist TV Bingo                            | 6:30pm<br>Swap Talk                                     | 6:30pm<br>Swap Talk                                       | 6:30pm<br>Money Week                                     | 6:30pm<br>Money Week                                   |
| 8:00pm<br>Halton Hills Council, Oct 22nd               | 7:00pm<br>PeopleSpeak                                   | 7:00pm<br>2001 Hockey Heritage Citation Awards            | 7:00pm<br>Halton Region Council, Oct 24th                | 7:00pm<br>Halton Region Council, Oct 24th              |
|  | 8:00pm<br>Citation Awards                               | 8:00pm<br>Citation Awards                                 | 10:30pm<br>Oster Health Connection                       | 8:00pm<br>SportsZONE Live                              |

Feature this week: "PeopleSpeak" Live with Joyce Savoline! Wednesday, 7:00 pm