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Woman with Crohn's Disease says life better; looks on the bright side in dealing with illness

By RICHARD VIVIAN

The Champion

iving with Crohn's Disease has turned Miltonian Sue Stomphorst's life around, making her healthier and happier than she ever was before.

"When I was sick and before I was sick, I would worry a lot. Now, I would say I live moment by moment. I don't worry, I just look at things like they happen for a reason," Ms Stomphorst told The Champion.

"It's actually been beneficial to my life — if that makes any sense. I just love life so much right now."

When Ms Stomphorst was diagnosed with the disease in 1989, she never expected it to have the positive impact it has on her life. In fact, she expected the opposite.

Crohn's Disease is a gastrointestinal disease that causes diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, and rectal bleeding.

"I thought, 'Why me? I've never been sick a day in my life. This isn't fair.' It was very much a shock," she said. "It took a long time to move on from that. That 'why me?' was probably a good year."

With the help of her doctor — including two surgeries — and alternative treatments, Ms Stomphorst has sent the disease into remission.

"I have two kids and I knew I needed to watch myself. I'm 100 per cent healthy right now. I've learned what it takes to stay that way.

"I've learned that by doing meditation I keep my stress level down, I exercise regularly and I eat properly. I know that if I do something wrong, it's going to be me paying for it."

Having recovered from the pain and discomfort associated with the disease, she has found a new lease on life.

In addition to finding more enjoyment in the little things, Ms Stomphorst also likes to expand on her experiences — taking up new activities for both summer and winter seasons. To name but a few of her new hobbies, she enjoys rock climbing, downhill skiing and horseback riding.

"I had to show myself that I can do stuff. I almost died a couple times and I swore to myself that I would keep life challenging and adventurous. I just wanted to have a new experience every year and grow," she said.

Her encounter with Crohn's Disease has also left her eager to help others. Going back to school, Ms Stomphorst trained and is now working as a reflexologist. A large portion of her

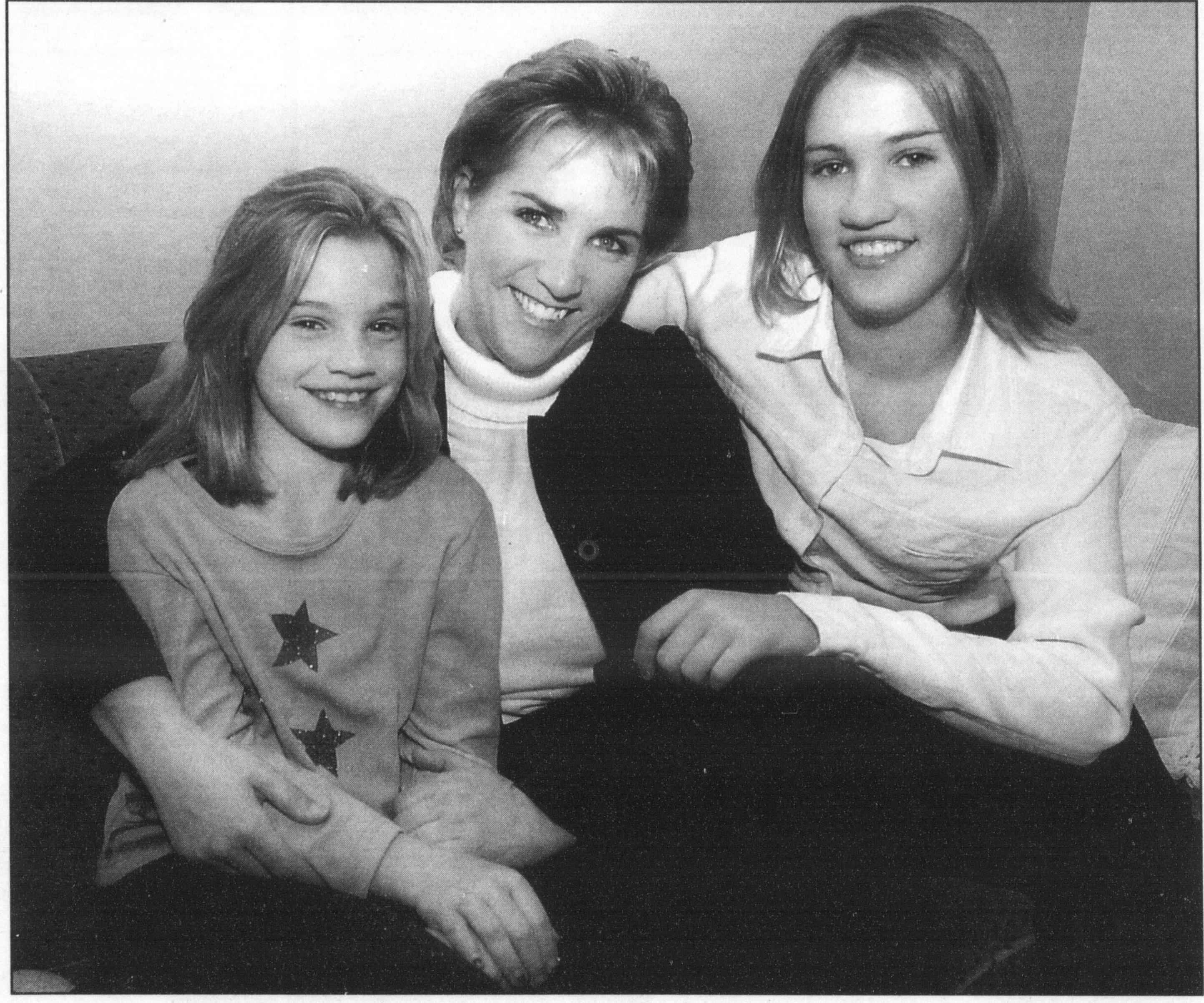


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Sue Stomphorst, who has Crohn's Disease, is the mother of two daughters Sarah (left) and Krista. Ms Stomphorst says her time with them is even more valuable since being diagnosed with the disease.

clients suffer from Crohn's Disease and other ailments.

"It's very rewarding to be able to help others. When someone tells me they feel better after I've worked on them it's like giving me a million dollars."

When she's not helping others one-on-one, Ms Stomphorst is pitching in on a grander scale — raising funds for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada.

November is Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month. Ms Stomphorst is currently organizing a fundraiser that will give people the opportunity to see what their options are in terms of alternative health.

For \$10, people will be able to spend 15 min-

utes with each of a series of alternative health practitioners who will discuss reflexology, nutrition, acupuncture, massage and more.

The February 17 event will take place at the Ramada Inn in Oakville.

For more information on the event or to book an appointment, contact Sue Stomphorst at (905) 876-2563 or e-mail sstomphorst@look.ca.

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COGECO 14 Programming Schedule - November 13th - November 19th, 2001

Tuesday, November 13th		Wednesday, November 14th		Thursday, November 15th		Saturday November 17th		Sunday, November 18th		Monday, November 19th	
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Tuesday Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Wednesday Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm 5:30pm	Plugged In! – Thursday Edition The Issue Is	1:00 pm	Acton Santa Claus Parade - Live!	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! - Weekend Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! - Monday Edition
5:30pm 6:30pm 8:00pm	Optimist TV Bingo Halton Hills Council, Nov 12th	5:30pm Osler Health Connection 6:30pm Swap Talk 8:00pm Georgetown San Claus Parade	Connection Swap Talk Georgetown Santa	6:30pm 7:00pm 8:00pm	Osler Health Connection Money Week Halton Region Council, Nov 14th			5:30pm 6:30pm 7:00pm 10:30pm	Money Week Seniors Showcase The Issue Is Osler Health Connection	5:30pm 6:30pm 7:00pm 8:00pm	Quick & Easy Water to Healthy Eating Money Week The Issue Is SportsZONE Live

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