

# Lifestyles

## Kids urged to turn off the TV and get active

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*

**H**ey kids, see that little button on the remote marked OFF?

Here's a novel concept — next week, try hitting it. And don't worry, there are plenty of activities to help fill the void.

That's the aim of the Halton Region Health Department's second annual TV-Turnoff Week, which locally runs this Monday to Friday.

Halton-area municipalities have a host of programs set up to help children six to 12 years of age detach themselves from the computer or boob tube — and Milton is no exception.

The Milton Leisure Centre will offer a different set of activities each day next week between 4 and 6 p.m., said Town of Milton fitness supervisor Tracy Hasselfeldt.

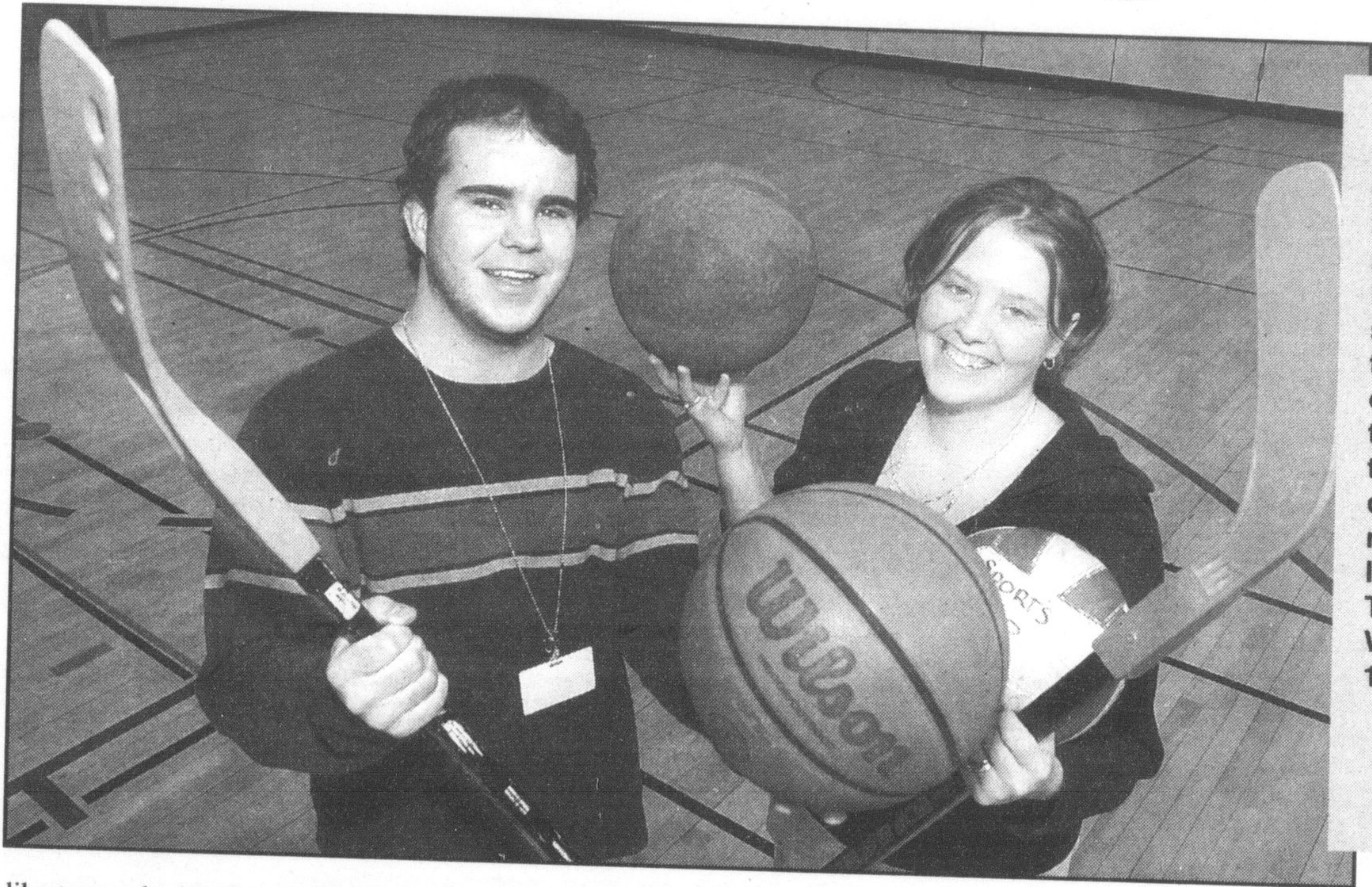
"It's a free drop-in program with a little bit of everything," she said. "Basically the Region's providing a guide to help parents find ways to get their kids off the sofa and become active."

Next week's line-up includes a wide range of TV alternatives — everything from crafts in the kitchen to a week-ending fun day that's set to feature just about every indoor sport possible, including always-popular dodge ball.

The program also includes an information package — available at participating locations like the leisure centre or by visiting [www.healthdept@halton.on.ca](http://www.healthdept@halton.on.ca) — which lists ways for both children and families to become more active.

While the Milton Leisure Centre is once again the focal point for the program locally, the TV-Turnoff Guide suggests a number of other sites around the area in which to get one's daily fitness fix — including Milton's many conservation parks.

Last year, the local program attracted roughly three dozen youngsters to the leisure centre, a number Ms Hasselfeldt would



Milton Leisure Centre's Brian Normore (left) and Tracy Hasselfeldt show some of the sports equipment that'll be used to attract children toward a more active lifestyle during TV-Turnoff Week April 7 to 11.

Photo by  
**GRAHAM PAINE**

like to see double this time around.

While she admits that many participants were children who were simply looking for another fitness opportunity, at least a quarter of last year's group were among the target audience — those who spend an unhealthy amount of time glued to the computer or television screen.

"We're finding nowadays that kids are spending more and more time in front of the TV and computer and that leads to obesity and a general lack of health," said Ms Hasselfeldt. "We're hoping to try to get kids to start changing that lifestyle and see what can happen when they do."

That doesn't necessarily require a huge leap into the sporting world, she stressed. Things as simple as taking a walk, helping make dinner or raking up leaves in the backyard can gradually stimulate an active routine. "I'd say start out small and build on it. Try it out and have some fun," said Ms Hasselfeldt.

For more information on local TV-Turnoff Week activities, call the leisure centre at (905) 878-7946.

Steve LeBlanc can be reached at [sleblanc@haltonsearch.com](mailto:sleblanc@haltonsearch.com).

## Just call me 'Slow Train Townsend' — yeah that's it

Here's my dilemma. Or a couple of my dilemmas.

I covered the Milton Marauders for The Champion last year, a season in which they lost every game.

Some people thought I was rough

on them, although I think I was more than fair. Later, in another of these columns I mentioned that I would like to play a down (or two) for the Marauders at running back in an actual game — not, of course, because I think I can do better, but because it's something I'd like to do. Like a fantasy experience.

So, now the Marauders have called my bluff. They've invited me to train with them, and I think they're going to give me a chance to carry the ball, for at least one play.

Some people have suggested it's a devious plot to get back at me and that I will be lucky to make it out of there alive. Instead of being an imbedded reporter, I'd be a beheaded reporter.

Even though I've lost 30 pounds — thanks to Beverly Hills Weight Management Centre and The Champion's Weight Loss Challenge — I haven't been very active physically for a number of years. I had to quit playing hockey because I couldn't bend over to tie up my skates, and my last at bat in slow pitch softball was a home run over the fence, which I couldn't run out because I pulled a muscle at the same time.

I feel as if I could start playing both again. Slow pitch is difficult because the Milton league has a waiting list that I've never managed to put my name on. If somebody knows of a league nearby for old timers, where I could play this year, even a mixed league, let me know.

Anyway, back to the football. The other day I tried running to see how it would feel again. I worked on my shucks and jives and it felt great... for the first 10 seconds. Next time I'm going to go for 20 seconds. Oh, yeah, the dilemmas. In my fantasy dreams I see myself carrying the football in for a touchdown. When I wake up, I'm throwing the ball on the ground, waving my hands in the air and running the other way.

If I do go work out with the team, I'm mostly afraid of embarrassing myself. They do 50 jumping jacks, I do five, that sort of thing. Embarrassing myself isn't something I should be worried about, since I do it all the time, but still it's a worry.

• see I'D on page 12



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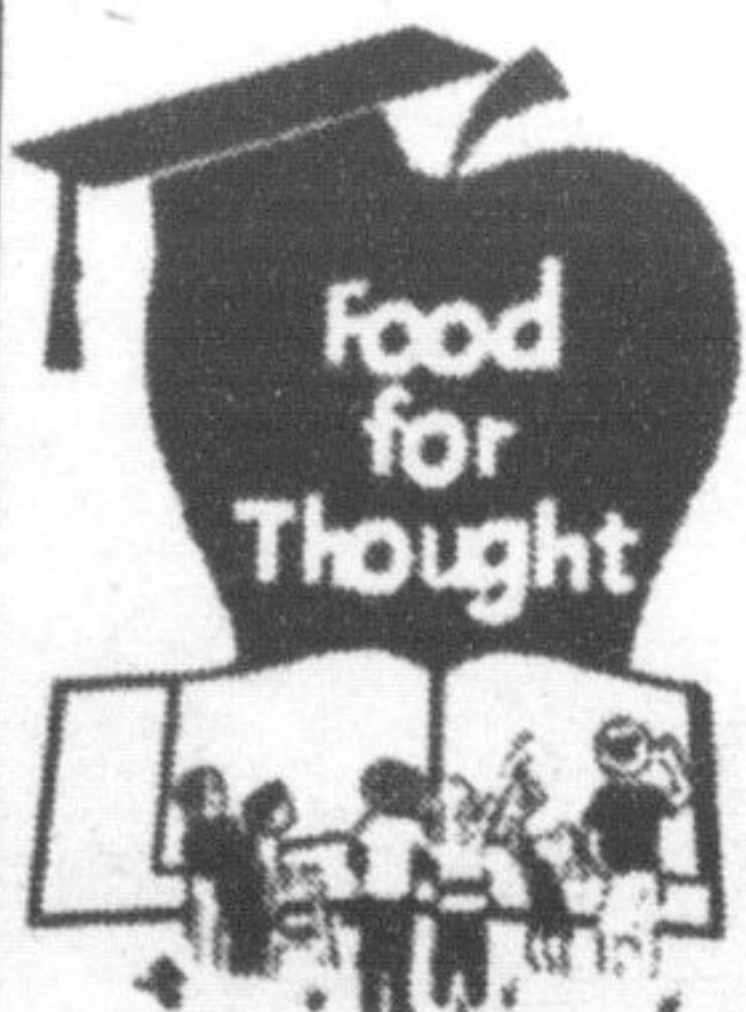
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### Nutrition Notes

How can local business help?

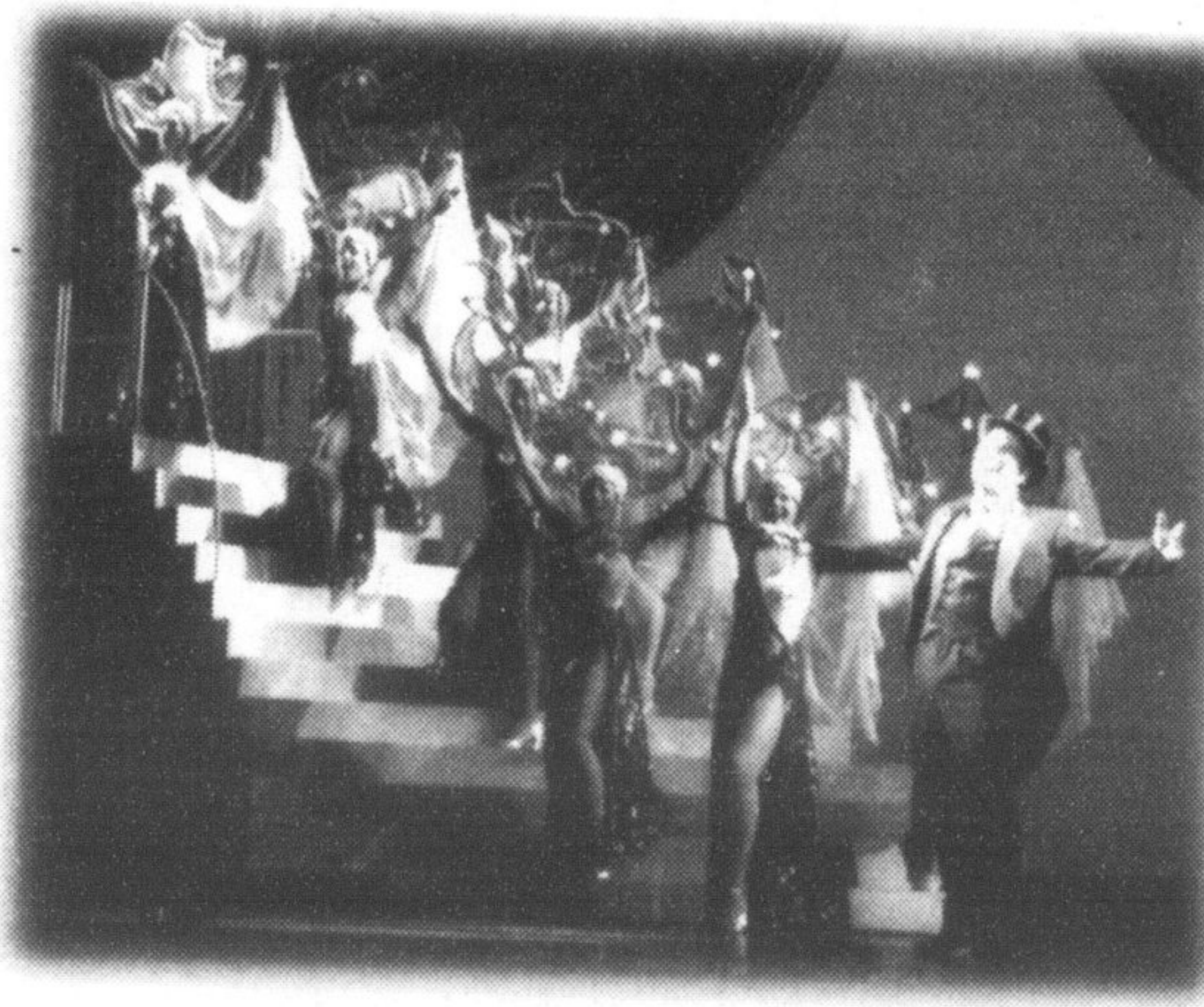
- Volunteer in a school nutrition program
- Make a financial donation
- Sponsor a program with a food donation
- Join the Halton Food for Thought partnership committee



Halton Food for Thought  
Contact Program  
Coordinator  
905-845-5597 ext. 201  
[foodforthought@cogeco.ca](mailto:foodforthought@cogeco.ca)

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