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Positive attitude goes long way: Olympians

Top athletes offer inspiration during stop at W.I. Dick

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

As the young Olympic athlete shared her story, students at W.I. Dick public school listened with uncharacteristic silence.

"We played against the U.S. in eight games leading up to the Olympics. And we didn't win a single game," said Jennifer Botterill, a member of the women's Canadian Olympic hockey team, which played in the 2002 Olympics. "But we still believed in ourselves. We decided we were going to learn something from each challenge we faced throughout the year."

Of course, the team eventually did beat the U.S. and not just in a practice. It claimed gold in the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics.

It was all due to team effort and believing in themselves, Ms Botterill said.

Ms Botterill was at W.I. Dick public school recently for a school presentation, along with three other Olympic athletes — Kate Pace-Lindsay, an alpine skier in the 1998 Nagano Olympics, sprinter Desai Williams, and Isabelle Turcotte-Baird, a tri-athlete in the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

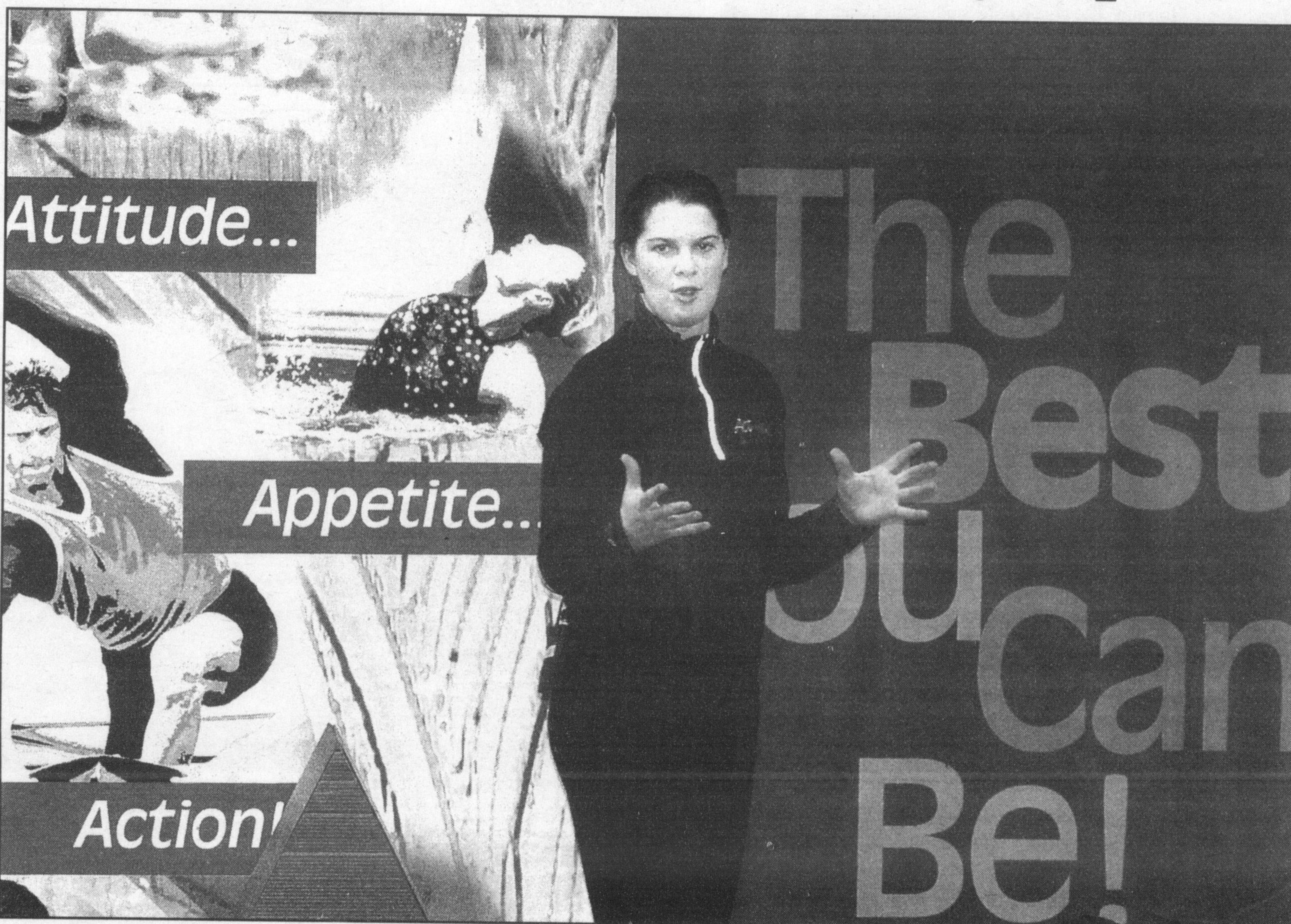
The athletes made the visit as part of a program aimed at helping students make healthy lifestyle choices. 'ACT Now — The Best You Can Be' is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and presents information in a fun, fresh package.

Olympians offer excitement

Containing enough hype to get each grade 6, 7 and 8 student excited, the presentation focused on three messages — having healthy attitudes, appetites, and engaging in healthy activity.

The athletes spoke about their personal experiences and how being healthy and having good attitudes was how they were able to get to the Olympics.

Afterward, Ms Botterill handled with ease the young crowd swarming her for autographs, even signing the occasional shirt and shoe.



When the crowd subsided, Ms Botterill said she was excited about having the opportunity to speak to students through ACT Now. She said it wasn't long ago when she was in the same place in life as the students.

"I remember watching the Olympics on TV, and having the dream of being there. I remember when (swimmer) Mark Tewksbury visited my school and I was in total awe. I think a little encouragement can make such a big difference for kids," she said.

Mathew Budge excitedly held up a white running shoe bearing four signatures and shouted to anyone who would listen, "They all signed my shoe! I'm going to keep these shoes forever."

Mathew, 11, said he's decided to eat healthier after hearing the negatives of eat-

ing too much sugar in the presentation.

"I normally eat chocolate too much," he said.

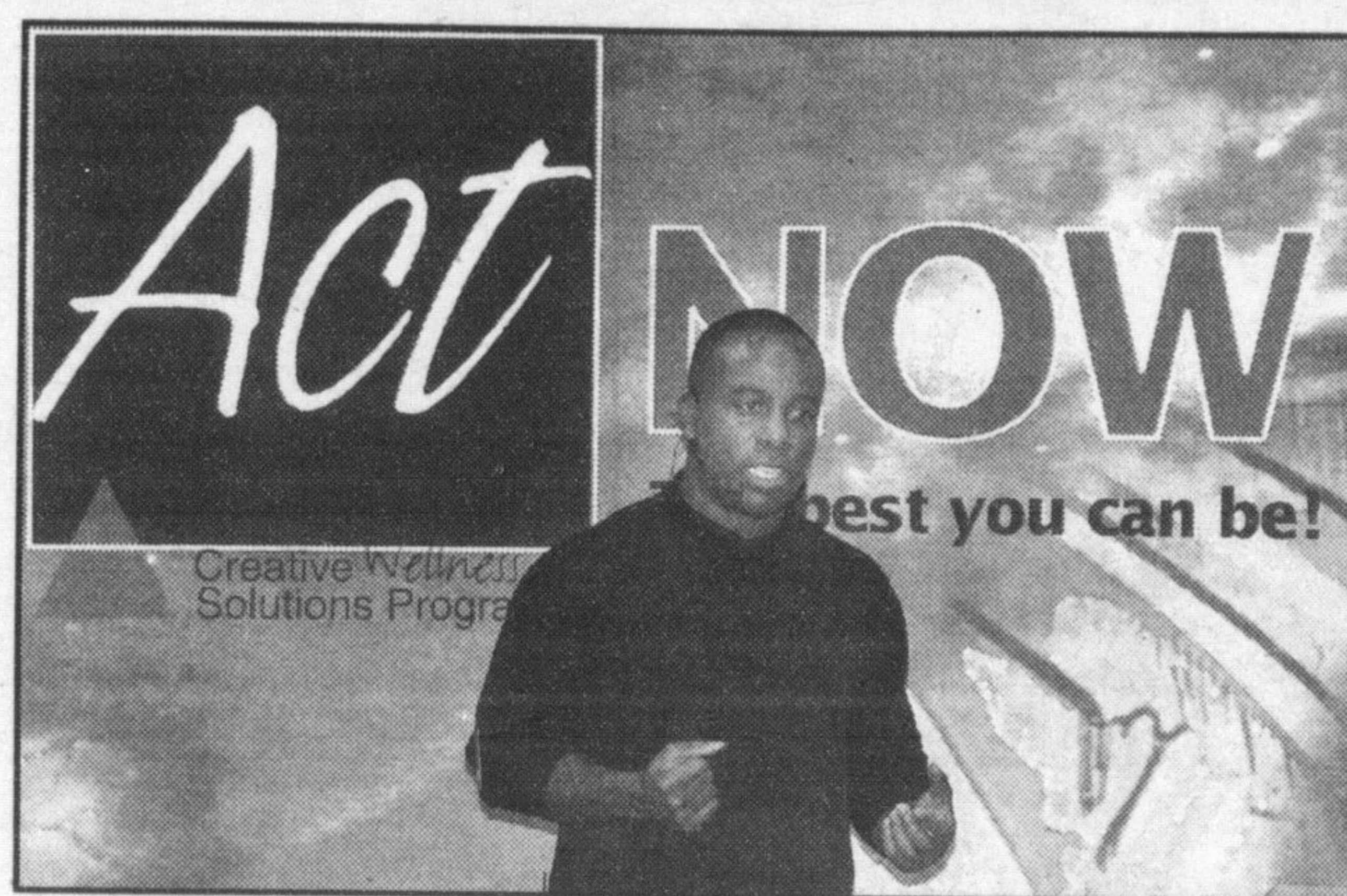
He added that he's never smoked and never will.

Donna Prusha, a parent volunteer who attended the presentation, said the presentation seemed well received.

"I think we're beginning to see an awareness of the necessity of better health," she said, calling the lack of nutrition and kids' inactive lifestyles a crisis situation.

The ACT Now program will continue at the school, with students setting goals for themselves and Ms Turcotte-Baird returning several more times this school year to encourage them.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



Olympians Jennifer Botterill (top) and Desai Williams (above) share their message of positive thinking and healthy lifestyle choices with students at W.I. Dick Middle School.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

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Programming Schedule — Tuesday, Dec. 2nd - Monday, December 8th, 2003

Tuesday, December 2		Wednesday, December 3		Thursday, December 4		Friday, December 5		Saturday, December 6		Sunday, December 7		Monday, December 8	
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Early Week Edition	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	5-10pm	Milton Rotary Christmas TV Auction (Live)	5, 6 & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Late Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Late Week Edition
5:30pm	Seniors Showcase	5:30pm	With Good Taste	5:30pm	Osler Health Connection					5:30pm	Be Inspired!	5:30pm	The War Amps present...
6:30pm	Optimist TV Bingo (Live)	6:30pm	Be Inspired	6:30pm	Main Street					6:30pm	Seniors Showcase	6:30pm	A Little Christmas
8:00pm	Halton Hills Inaugural Council - Dec. 1st	7:00pm	Swap Talk (Live)	8:00pm	Milton Santa Claus Parade					7:00pm	"A Little Christmas"	7:00pm	Be Inspired
		8:00pm	Milton Inaugural Council - Dec. 1st	10:00pm	Halton Region Inaugural Council - Dec. 3rd					8:00pm	Georgetown Santa Claus Parade	8:00pm	SportsZONE Live
												9:00pm	Acton Santa Claus Parade

"A Little Christmas" with Father Mark Curtis - Sunday, December 7th at 7:00 pm