



Community Page

Youth wins writing contest on mentoring

12-year-old writes about how much he values his mentor from Big Brothers

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

Nobody knows better than his mom how 12-year-old Tyler Wilson's life has been impacted by Big Brothers of Halton.

Struggling for words, Ms Wilson-Gervais tried to explain just what it's meant for Tyler to have someone guiding him through life's twists and turns and helping him recover from the tumbles. "Steve's had a huge influence on Tyler's life," Ms Wilson-Gervais said.

In his Big Brother, Steve Roy, Tyler found a friend and role model.

For the past six years, the two have been a team facing life together, enough in itself to put Big Brothers of Halton in Tyler's good books.

And then there's the hockey. "About four or five years ago, we lived a very different life," Ms Wilson-Gervais explained, the memories obviously painful.

Financial hardships were just one of the challenges they faced, and activities like hockey, which many kids take for granted, just weren't possible.

Once again, Big Brothers came to the rescue. "They offered Tyler a chance to play hockey in a Milton hockey organization," Ms Wilson-Gervais said.

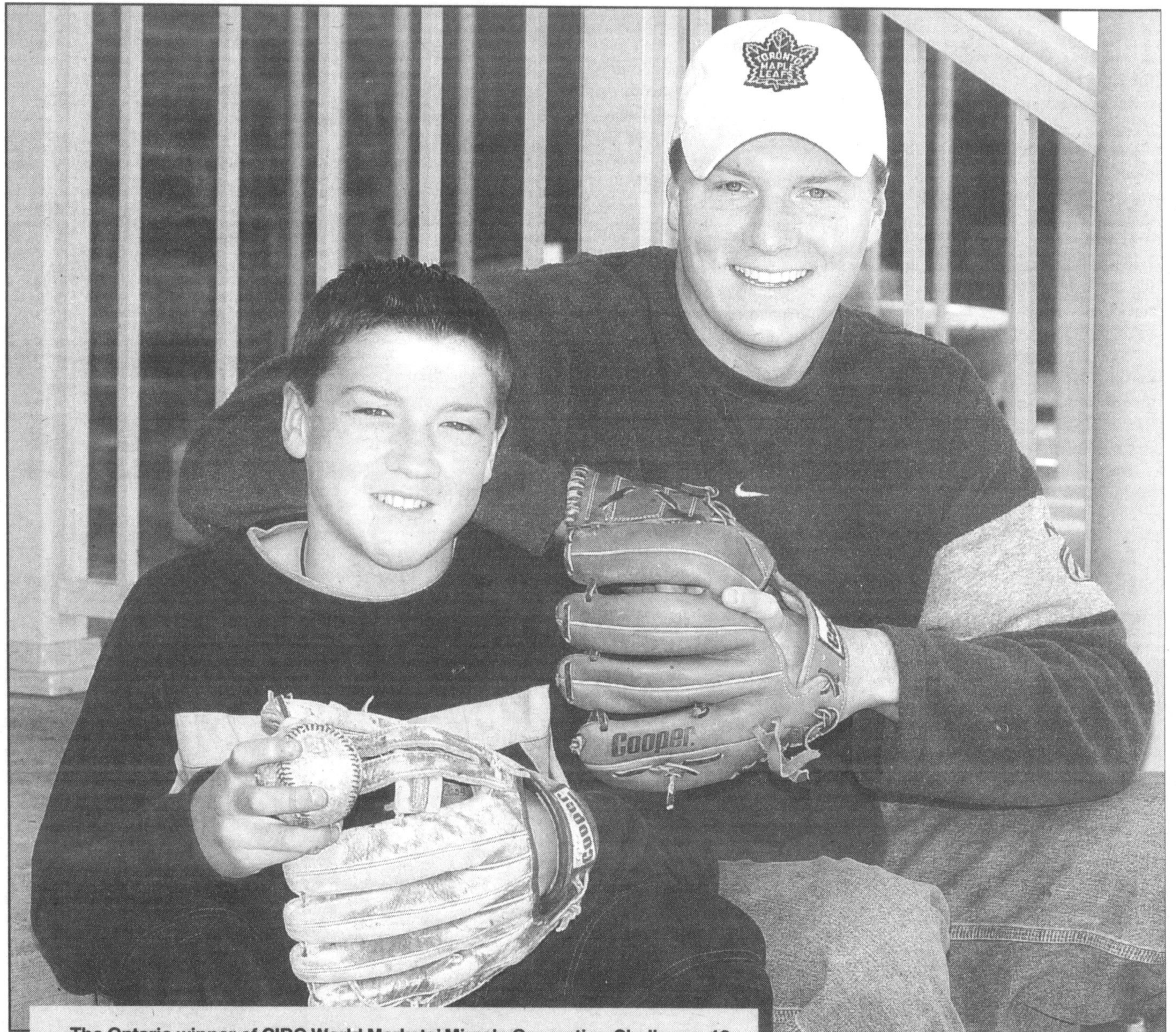
To the then eight-year-old boy, it was as if he had been given the world. "He'll never forget them for that," his mom said.

So it came as no surprise that when Tyler found out he had won a contest with part of the prize being a \$1,000 donation to a charity, he decided to give the money to Big Brothers of Halton.

"They've done a lot for me — they paid for my hockey — and I wanted to thank them by giving them the money," said Tyler, a grade 7 student at St. Peter's Separate School.

As the Ontario winner of CIBC World Markets' Miracle Generation Challenge, Tyler was recently presented with a \$500 Canada Savings Bond in addition to the \$1,000 for charity.

The 2003 Miracle Generation Challenge — the third annual contest — asked youths 18 and younger to write about mentoring. In his composition, Tyler described his relationship with his mentor: "I always know that I always have a buddy to call whenever I need someone to talk to



The Ontario winner of CIBC World Markets' Miracle Generation Challenge, 12-year-old Tyler Wilson, recently wrote about how much his buddy Steve Roy and the Big Brothers program has meant to him over the past six years.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

or share special things that happen in my life."

Sue Storey, chair of the Children's Miracle Foundation, said she was impressed with Tyler's entry. "While reading Tyler's entry and all the winning entries, I was amazed to see the understanding of the impact mentors have had on these young people's lives," she said.

Lena Bassford, executive director of Big Brothers of Halton, said it's important that the word continue to spread about the importance of

mentoring.

"A mentor is someone with life experience who's willing to share it with another," she said, adding today's world makes mentoring essential. "We live in a society with a whole sector of children that falls through the cracks and doesn't have the same opportunities others have."

Although she's thrilled about the \$1,000 donation, Ms Bassford said there's something even better.

"Even more (important) than the money is the fact that Tyler recognizes the impact of his Big Brother on his life and his family's life," she said.

As for Tyler's reaction to winning the contest, Ms Wilson-Gervais said he's proud of himself. But even greater than that is his happiness over having one more chance to tell the world how much his Big Brother means to him, she said.

"When Steve's happy, Tyler's happy."

For information on volunteering with Big Brothers of Halton, call (905) 339-2355.

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Programming Schedule – Tuesday, April 27- Monday, May 3, 2004

Tuesday, April 27		Wednesday, April 28		Thursday, April 29		Friday, April 30		Saturday, May 1		Sunday, May 2		Monday, MAY 3	
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm	Plugged In! Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm	Plugged In! Early Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Late Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Late Week Edition	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In! Late Week Edition	5pm	Plugged In! Late Week Edition
5:30pm	Seniors Showcase	5:30pm	PeopleSpeak in Halton	5:30pm	Osler Health Connection			5:30pm	Be Inspired	5:30pm	Be Inspired	5:30pm	Kinsmen TV Auction
6:30pm	Optimist TV Bingo (Live)	6:30pm	Be Inspired	6:30pm	Money Week			6:30pm	Seniors Showcase	6:30pm	Seniors Showcase	6:30pm	Kinsmen TV Auction Preview
8:00pm	Halton Hills Council - April 19	7:00pm	Swap Talk (Live)	7:00pm	The Issue Is...			7:00pm	PeopleSpeak in Halton	7:00pm	PeopleSpeak in Halton	6:30pm	Georgetown Kinsmen TV Auction
		8:00pm	Milton Council - Apr 26	7:30pm	Cogeco Customer Call-In Show (LIVE)			8:00pm	Money Week	8:00pm	Money Week		
				8:30pm	Main Street			8:30pm	Faces - Milton Community Awards				
				10:00pm	Halton Region Council - Apr 21								

Kinsmen TV Auction, Monday 6pm Visit www.georgetownkinsmen.ca