



Community Page

Rose Cherry's Home nearing completion

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

For the past six years, Councillor Mark Curtis has had to dream about what Rose Cherry's Home for Kids would look like.

Now, for the first time, he can see it. The Ward 2 Councillor recently toured the soon-to-open palliative/respite care facility on No. 15 Sideroad along with Mayor Gord Krantz. "It took my breath away when I saw it because it's so long in coming," Mr. Curtis said, adding, "This is like a dream come true."

Rose Cherry's Home for Kids will provide pediatric hospice care and respite services to families with children who have life-limiting or life-threatening illnesses requiring complex care.

Once complete, the home is expected to provide services to 350 families each year.

The centre is named in memory of hockey commentator Don Cherry's wife.

The facility's opening has been long overdue, and a source of frustration for many involved, but it looks like phase one will finally be opening in September, with its grand opening September 23.

"It's hard to believe it's finally (opening)," said Mr. Curtis, who's been on the board of directors since 1998, two years after the charity was incorporated. "We're now at the point where we're doing the painting and landscaping."

Mr. Curtis said Milton has been a little bit out of the loop with regards to the facility for the past while, since the Toronto office took it over. But now, he added, Miltonians will be able to see what's been accomplished and what so many people in town have supported in various ways.

And something to be proud of it sure is, he said. "Once Milton people get a glimpse of it we'll see excitement and pride in Milton. This is something that's going to put Milton on the map."

The home will provide what, for many families, could be the first break they've had in years from caring for their children. Stays will range from overnight to up to two weeks.

Although phase one will initially open with two beds, Mr. Curtis said, the \$3.5 million phase will eventually include respite bedrooms with six beds, two palliative care suites, five bathrooms, a gathering area, an outdoor terrace, a nursing area, a kitchen and a dining room.

In the plans for phase two are an addi-

tional three respite bedrooms with six beds, two additional baths, a hydrotherapy room, a chapel, a family room and an activities area. Phase two will also have a Snoezelen room, designed to stimulate the child's senses through the use of soothing lights, soft sounds and tactile textures.

The building itself has "a Milton flavour," Mr. Curtis said, adding it blends right in with its escarpment environs.

Mr. Curtis has been serving as an ambassador for the home as he travels on his concert tours. He has also done a lot of fundraising, donating some of the proceeds — including from his eastern Ontario tour, which begins today — from his concerts to the home.

As someone who has experience dealing with families who have lost children, Mr. Curtis said palliative care for children is near to his heart. "Children are the most vulnerable. They need special care."

He said he's now looking forward to stepping out of his ambassadorial role and into a more hands-on role.

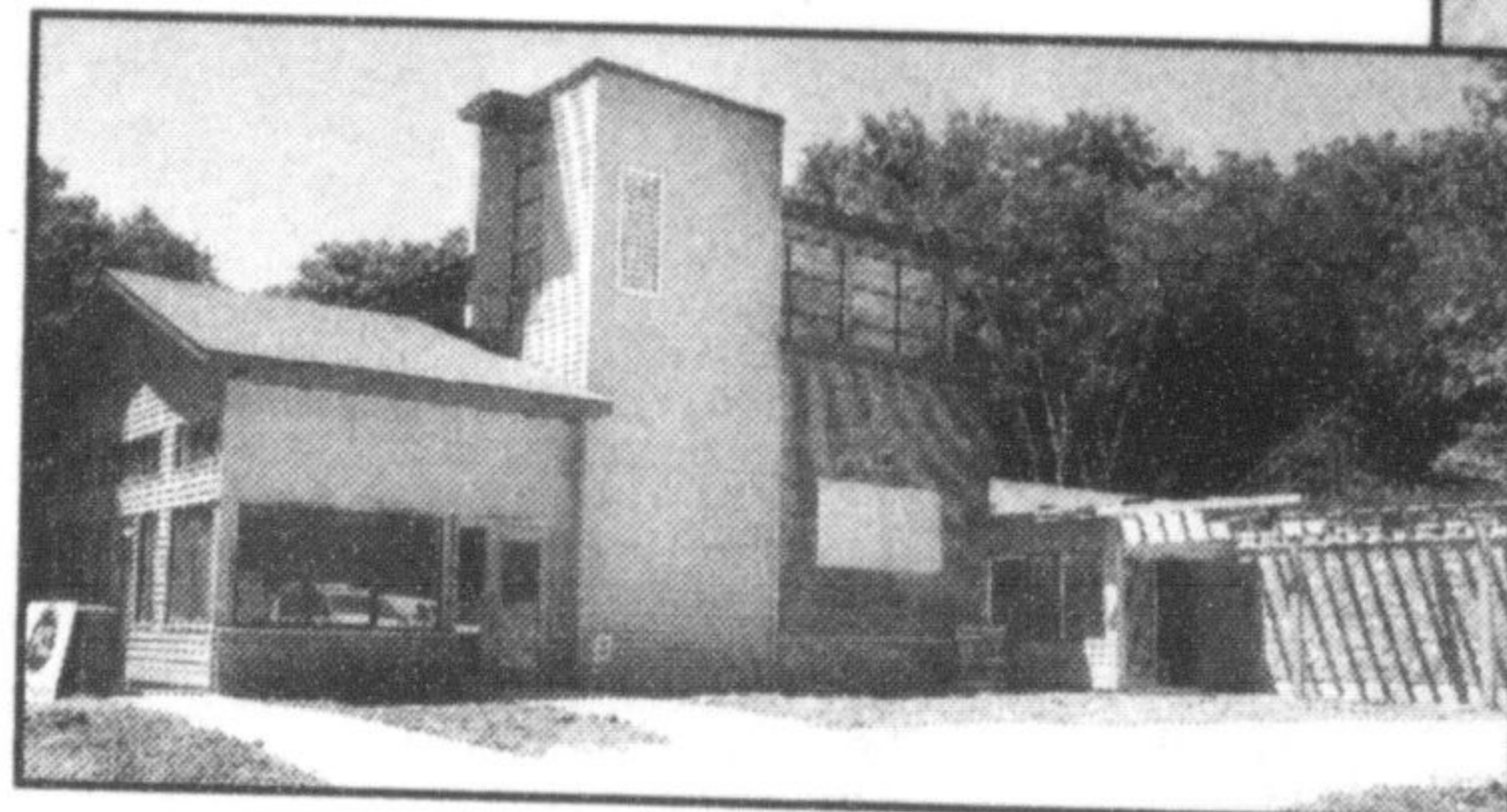
From the very beginning, the project has been faced with challenges. It was expected to open last year, but the opening was delayed due to a lack of funds.

Originally, the idea was to renovate a home that was already on the site. However, a potentially-harmful mould that was discovered in 1998 resulted in starting fresh. Though this resulted in a better facility, it also meant a more expensive facility, Mr. Bowker said. But the home's supporters came through, with \$1.2 million of gifts in kind such as building materials and labour.

"I'm absolutely over the moon," Mr. Bowker said. "It's been a long, hard climb but people came together and kept pushing and we got there."

The project couldn't have happened without its many partners, Mr. Bowker said.

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Don Cherry and Father Mark Curtis tour the nearly-completed Rose Cherry's Home for Kids Saturday.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE



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Programming Schedule – Tuesday, July 27 - Monday, August 2, 2004

Tuesday, July 27		Wednesday, July 28		Thursday, July 29		Friday, July 30		Saturday, July 31		Sunday, August 1		Monday, August 2	
9:10, 11am & 12:30pm	Plugged In!	9:10, 11am & 12:30pm	Plugged In!	9:10, 11am & 12:30pm	Plugged In!	9:10, 11am & 12:30pm	Plugged In!	9:10, 11am & 12:30pm	Plugged In!	9 & 10pm	Plugged In!	9:10, 11am & 12:30pm	Plugged In!
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!	1:00 pm	Milton Council - Jul 26	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!	4:30pm & 7:30pm	Fergus Truck Show	10:30pm	Fergus Truck Show	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!
		8:00 pm	Milton Council - Jul 26	5pm, 6pm & 7:30 pm				7:30pm	Plugged In!	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!		

"The Fergus Truck Show - Sat 4 pm & Sun 10:30 am