



# Community Page

## Wanted: Women mentors for area girls

*Time commitment not necessarily great, but rewards certainly can be*

By **MELANIE HENNESSEY**  
*The Champion*

**G**irls Incorporated of Halton has a long list of local girls waiting for mentors and urgently needs area women to volunteer their time.

"There's an exceptional need right now. We have 18 girls waiting for mentors," said Girls Inc. Executive Director Claudia Scobie. "These children really need that support system."

The local organization, formerly known as Big Sisters of North Halton, currently has close to 40 women who provide friendship, guidance and support for young girls aged five to 18 through mentoring.

"It's getting very difficult to find mentors because people think it's a huge time commitment, but it's really not," said Ms Scobie. "The child really becomes a part of your lifestyle. Take them shopping, or for a bike ride or out to walk the dog."

While Girls Inc. only asks that mentors volunteer their time three times a month minimum, she said many women see their young companions more than that.

Such is the case for Milton's Andrea Sharp, who usually sees nine-year-old Brandy a couple times a week. She's been a mentor for a year now, initially getting involved because she has two teenage boys and wanted some "girl interaction."

"I love it," she said. "I've just had such a huge connection with this little girl. It's amazing. I'd enjoy being with her every day."

Ms Sharp said when her and Brandy are together, they do everything from swimming and skating to baking and homework. She stressed that it doesn't take a huge time commitment to be a mentor.

"You could get together and do something as simple as kick a soccer ball around," she said. "I want to impress on people how wonderful and rewarding it is. I just think people could really benefit from this."

Potential mentors, which have to be over 19 years old, go through a careful screening process that Ms Scobie said involves an application, police check and reference check with people outside the family.

Besides mentoring, Ms Scobie said the organization also runs many other pro-

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**ANDREA SHARP**

grams, such as monthly social functions, a summer camp and informal education programs.

The educational aspect covers topics like pregnancy and drug abuse prevention, economic literacy, adolescent health, violence prevention and sports participation.

"Girls today face different issues and challenges in their daily lives, and our programs address these issues," she said.

A program called Discovery Leadership is also now underway in Milton.

"Young girls come together in their community with women and learn about Canadian women in history, discover the leadership within themselves and take on a community project," Ms Scobie said of the new initiative.

The local group also has a fashion show/luncheon fundraiser coming up September 12 at Milton's Glencairn Golf Club. The event, running from noon to 4 p.m., will feature designer clothing and door prizes, along with a raffle and silent auction. Tickets cost \$50, which includes lunch and wine. "There'll be models of every shape, size and age," Ms Scobie pointed out. "We're hoping this will be one of our key fundraisers."

Those who would like to get involved with Girls Inc., either through mentoring, fundraising, as an office volunteer, committee member or board member, should contact Ms Scobie at (905) 854-9953 or [girlsinhalton@aol.com](mailto:girlsinhalton@aol.com). For more information, visit [www.girlsinc.org](http://www.girlsinc.org).

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at [mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

**Andrea Sharp says she's thoroughly enjoyed being a mentor to nine-year-old Brandy. Here the two work on a scrap book of all the things they've done since they met.**

*Photo by GRAHAM PAINE*



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**Programming Schedule – Tuesday, August 10 - Monday, August 16, 2004**

Tuesday, August 10		Wednesday, August 11		Thursday, August 12		Friday, August 13		Saturday, August 14		Sunday, August 15		Monday, August 16	
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!	1:00pm	Halton Hills Council - Aug 9	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!	4:30pm	TV Cogeco Sports: Flamboro Speedway Racing	10:30pm	TV Cogeco Sports: Flamboro Speedway Racing	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!
8:00pm	Halton Hills Council - Aug 9	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!					7:30pm	Plugged In!	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm	Plugged In!		

**TV Cogeco Sports: Flamboro Speedway Racing - Sat 4pm, Sun 10:30am**