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# Big Brothers of Halton, Big Sisters of Oakville merge

Big Brothers of Halton and Big Sisters of Oakville have officially merged, creating a vibrant new agency for which the children continue to come first, says the organization.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton, as the joint venture is now called, came into being February 22 when members of both organizations approved the amalgamation. The meetings were followed by a joint celebration.

Former Big Sisters Executive Director Elaine Collins has accepted the position of executive director of the new agency. Ms Collins has an MBA and came from a successful background of personal commercial banking prior to joining the Big Sister team almost three years ago.

Ms Collins said she's looking forward to the challenge that lies with unifying two agencies into one.

"It is really about doing what's best for the at-risk children of this

community," she said. "We will be able to share our strengths, expertise and community relationships for the benefit of both girls and boys."

The United Way of Oakville, a major source of funding for both organizations, has been supportive throughout the merger process. The agencies were also assisted by the law firm O'Connor McLeod Hanna, which donated time preparing the necessary legal documentation.

Big Brothers of Halton was founded in 1965 followed by Big Sisters of Oakville in 1968. The national body of Big Brothers and Big Sisters unified in 2000 with such positive results that many regional chapters followed suit, and by 2004 only eight communities nationally hadn't merged. Locally, directors from both boards began a dialogue more than a year ago to explore ways to forge a closer partnership.

The new agency will provide

increased efficiencies, allow for better promotion and expand services free of issues associated with gender.

Working out of the Morden Road office formerly occupied by only Big Brothers, staff members — who are accustomed to running operations on extremely tight budgets — will save more money through such pragmatic measures as combining telephone systems, photocopying and even a postal meter. Mileage can also be reduced since staffers can stop duplicating visits, one to see a little boy, another for a girl.

From the public's point of view, people will no longer have to split their financial donations based on gender, making fundraising less of a struggle.

If anyone in the community would like more information about the merger, they're encouraged to contact Ms Collins at (905) 339-2355 or (905) 338-0238.

## Blacksmith presentation at Waldie's

Ever wonder how blacksmiths were able to turn iron ore into usable iron bars?

The Milton Historical Society and Waldie's Blacksmith Shop will present 'Historic Iron Smelting — Dirt to Metal, Bar to Object' at the Blacksmith Shop, 16 James St., March 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Professional blacksmith and museum consultant Darrell Markewitz will present an overview of the his-

tory of iron, the blacksmith and iron objects. He'll show how dirt — iron ore — was smelted into iron bars, and discuss the history of iron smelting, forges and tools used by blacksmiths throughout the ages, with a survey of smithed objects from the Celtic iron age to the Canadian settlement era.

The cost is \$5. Registration is required and seating is limited. Call (905) 875-4156.

### MILTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

proudly presents

# The 2004 Community Awards Gala



**SATURDAY APRIL 2, 2005**  
**Granite Ridge Golf Club**

Cocktails: 6:00 pm  
Dinner: 7:30 pm  
Tickets: \$75 per person  
(GST included)  
Black tie dress optional

Tickets now on sale  
and can be purchased by  
contacting the Chamber at  
**905-878-0581**

*Congratulations to the 2005 recipients*

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:** Audrea Lear-Costigan  
**CITIZEN of the YEAR:** Karl Reichert  
**PRESIDENT'S AWARD:** Don Joyce, Rita Ward

*Congratulations to the 2005 nominees*

**BUSINESS of the YEAR (25 Employees or less)**  
The Halton Compass,  
Milton Springers Gymnastics Club,  
Parkway Auto Trade

**BUSINESS of the YEAR (26 Employees or more)**  
Granite Ridge Golf Club,  
Milton District Hospital

**BUSINESS PERSON of the YEAR**  
Shamim Bhimji, Ramada Inn and Conference Centre,  
Donna Danielli, The Vacuum Shop,  
Angelo De Medicis, Milton Home Hardware Building Centre

**CHAMBER VOLUNTEER MEMBER of the YEAR**  
Howard Mott, Hutchinson Thompson Henderson Mott



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