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Community Page

Lots of kids await Big Brother, Big Sister

Demand high for volunteers

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

As the puppy and 11-year-old boy romped around in the backyard, Adam Barringer looked on, his satisfaction evident. The boy and dog chased each other around and around until both were breathless.

This wasn't the first time Mr. Barringer, 26, had brought over the dog, and it surely wouldn't be the last.

On other days, the pair opts to play video games, attend a sports event, swim or watch a movie.

The common denominator, besides the fun activities, is they're all done together. For the past three years, Mr. Barringer, a police officer, has been a mentor to Peter through the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Halton's One-to-One program.

"Since we got the dog, he wants to see me more," Mr. Barringer said, laughing.

Getting Peter a Big Brother was his mom's idea, the boy explained.

"Because I needed a friend."

Quickly became friends

Peter said he was hesitant at first about meeting Mr. Barringer. After all, he was a stranger. But after the first meeting — the pair went bowling — all doubts subsided.

Peter's mom, Beth Snoj, said she realized Peter would benefit from having "an ongoing male relationship with a male role model."

So she contacted BBBS Halton. She said she'll always remember Peter's attitude when he returned from his first outing with Mr. Barringer.

"When Peter came back, he was literally jumping up and down saying, 'Can he be my Big Brother?'"

Peter's friendship with Mr. Barringer plays a big role in his life, Ms Snoj said, but it goes further than that.

"Peter says 'Adam's my hero.' But he's mine, too. As a parent, to have someone willing to give of his time and be a positive influence and let him (Peter) know there's another way for men to be... that's a great gift."

Peter said he knows he's one of the lucky ones. There are many boys and girls ranging from five to 14 years old on the waiting list for a Big Brother or Big Sister. Currently, there are 40 kids waiting.

"I feel sorry (for them)," Peter said.

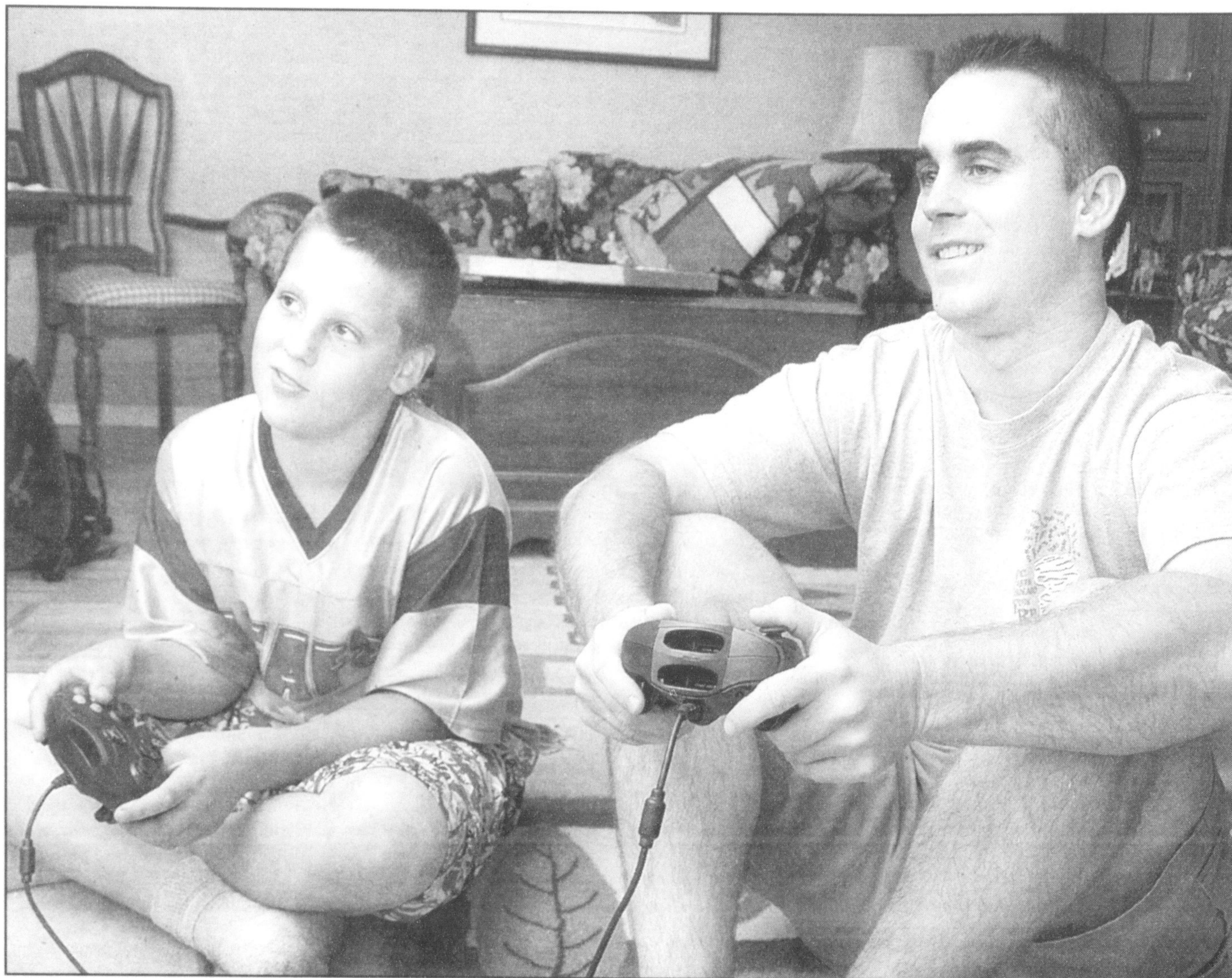


Photo by SABRINA BYRNES

Big Brother Adam Barringer plays video games with Little Brother Peter. Mr. Barringer has been his Big Brother for three years.

The average wait, said case manager Jean Koziak, is six to eight months, although it could be as short as three weeks or as long as three years.

There are various factors case workers look at when determining a child's eligibility for the One-to-One program, which sees him or her paired with an adult of the same sex.

Essentially, an eligible child is someone who "is determined to be in need of a positive adult role model," Ms Koziak said.

In most cases, the child is from a single parent family, although not always, she said.

The big and little brother or sister do a variety of activities together, usually getting together for three or four hours each week for an initial commitment of one year, Ms Koziak said.

Activities can include — but certainly aren't

limited to — cooking together, going for walks, playing games, going on day trips or to sports events, playing sports and watching movies.

"Matches are made not in order (on the waiting list), but on the basis of interest, personality, compatibility and location," Ms Koziak said.

Once a month, BBBS Halton plans activities. All the pairs need to do is show up.

The goal, Ms Koziak said, is for the Little Brother or Sister to learn new skills, to have an increased confidence level, and to have valuable guidance, support and friendship.

"When someone feels they're genuinely liked, their self esteem is improved," Ms Koziak said, adding, "To make a difference in one child's life is a huge thing."

And, she said, it's not only the kids who have fun. The adults do too, and find themselves left

with an incredibly rewarding feeling.

Mr. Barringer can attest to that.

He said he doesn't think of the job as a responsibility or a commitment because he has such a good time doing it.

"I have fun, and I don't think of having fun as a responsibility," he said.

It was after chatting with a few guys who were Big Brothers that Mr. Barringer first became interested in the program. Now, he said, he and Peter are friends for life.

"I've learned what it's like to be a kid again," he said.

For more information on becoming a mentor to a child in need, call BBBS Halton at (905) 339-2355, ext. 222 or visit www.bbshalton.ca.

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TV COGECO

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Cogeco Cable Channel 14 Programming Schedule — Tuesday, September 20 - Monday, September 26, 2005

Tuesday, September 20	Wednesday, September 21	Thursday, September 22	Friday, September 23	Saturday, September 24	Sunday, September 25	Monday, September 26
Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio
8:00am - 12:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 1:00pm SportsZONE Live (Replay)	8:00am - 1:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 1:00pm Halton Hills Council Sep 19 2005	8:00am - 12:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 12:00pm Swap Talk (Replay)	8:00am - 1:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 1:00pm Halton Region Council	8:00am - 11:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 11:00am Niagara Wine Festival Parade (Live)	8:00am - 10:30am Plugged In! EXTRA 10:30am TVC Sports: HS Football - Notre Dame vs Assumption	8:00am - 1:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 1:00pm Halton Hills Council Sep 19 2005
2:00am - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 6:00pm Optimist TV Bingo (Live)	4:00am - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 6:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	1:00pm Miss Acton Pageant 2:00pm - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	4:00am - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 6:00pm - 9:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	12:00pm - 4:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 4:00pm TVC Sports: HS Football - Notre Dame vs Assumption	12:30pm - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 6:00pm Halton Hills Council Sep 19 2005	4:00pm - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 6:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA
7:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA 8:00pm Auto Experts (Live)	8:00pm Swap Talk (Live) 9:00pm Miss Acton Pageant (Live)	9:00pm Halton Region Council 14 2005 Sep	9:00pm Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	6:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	9:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	9:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA