

Young gymnast caps another season with provincial gold

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

So much for having to wait a year before claiming provincial gold again.

Making the jump to the Level 2, 10 to 12-year-old boys division this season, Keanu Nunes was hardly expected to reign supreme like he did the year before.

After all, he was among the youngest gymnasts in his new field — having only turned 10 last month.

Hopes were that Keanu would simply keep developing his skills and perhaps crack the top five at the Ontario championships, with gold not a realistic goal until next spring.

But the Mississauga Team Futures competitor expedited those plans earlier this month, with an exceptional performance in Oakville — turning back 13 challengers to grab top spot in the province.

"It feels really good," said Keanu, who's been involved in gymnastics for four years now and already has two Ontario titles under his proverbial belt. "This year it was much harder, so I was really happy to win."

The young gymnast delivered medal-winning efforts in four of his six individual events, punctuating his campaign with a golden showing on

the parallel bars to squeeze past Tristan McDermid of Toronto Gymnastics International in the all-around scoring.

"I felt really good on the bars and had a lot of energy," recalled Keanu, who also struck silver on the high bar and rings and was third on the pommel horse.



Keanu Nunes

Added coach Zhao Hiu Huang, "Keanu was well prepared and did very well. There were a lot of boys who'd been in the division for a year or two, so for him to win was great."

Capturing Ontario gold certainly didn't look to be in the cards for Keanu early in the season, when he placed a modest sixth at the initial qualifying meet in North Bay.

However, steady improvement over the next few months netted more favourable results at the next three competitions — and set the stage for his triumphant season finish. "I got more confidence as the season went on," said the E.W. Foster School fourth grader. "And the visualization I do with my dad, who's a soccer coach, really helped again. I really thought I could do it (at provincials)."

As a result of his recent efforts, Keanu has been selected to be part of the Rising Star camp — aimed at developing promising young gymnasts — this weekend in Oakville.

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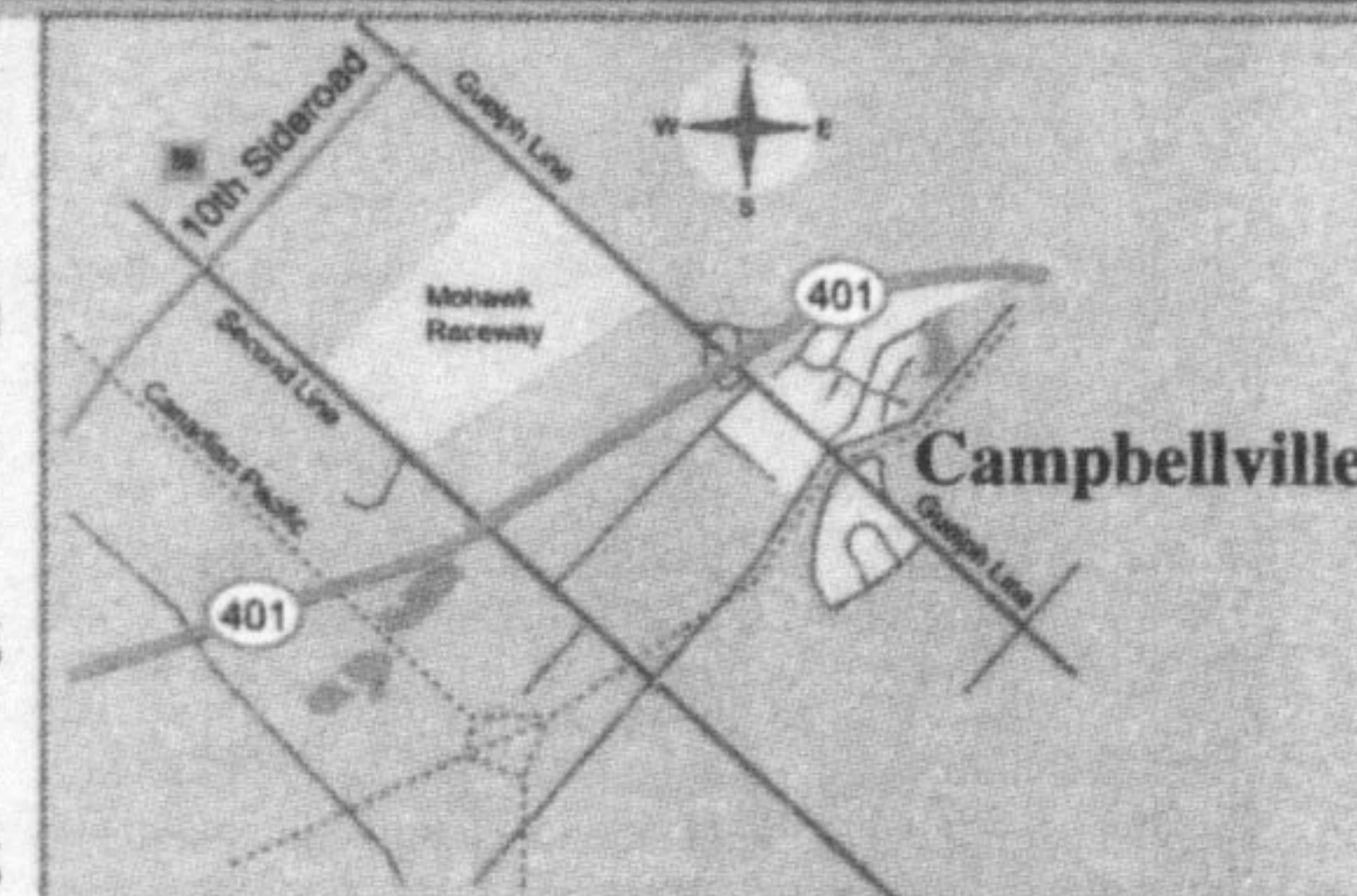
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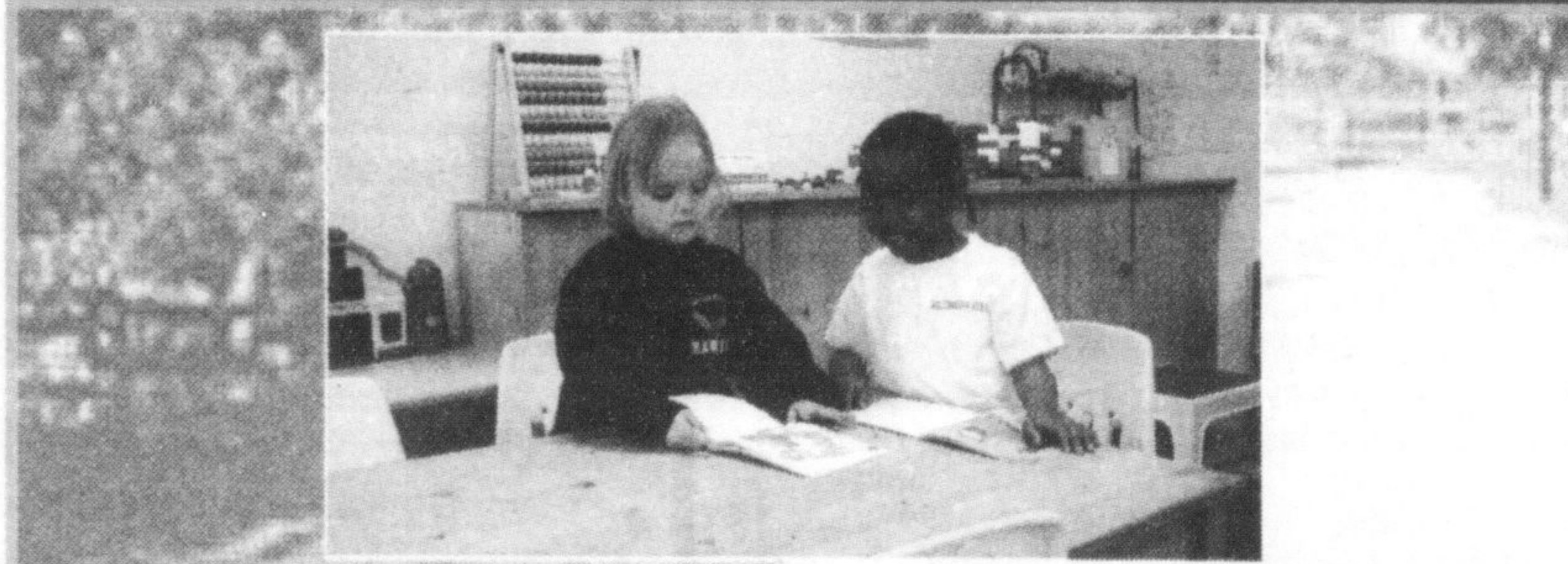
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- Non-perishable food items or cash donations will also be gratefully accepted on behalf of Halton area food banks.



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Thank you to all who submitted photos & please watch for them to be published in a special section coming in June.

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