

BUSINESS

Students learning young about world of business

By Howard Mozel
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Don't let the t-shirts, flip-flops and beach shorts fool you: the 2006 graduates of Halton Region's Summer Company program proved they're indeed business leaders in the making.

Each of the 19 young people — the largest turnout ever for the local program — runs their own company, with products and services ranging from hand-crafted jewelry and Web site design to summer camps and chartered fishing trips. All are secondary and post-secondary students between the ages of 15 and 29.

"The McGuinty government is on the side of small business and entrepreneurs who help Ontario prosper," said Ontario Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Harinder Takhar, on hand to offer his congratulations during the recent graduation at the Halton Regional Centre.

Students get funding

The government is spending more than \$1 million in 2006 to provide 370 students across the province with first-hand experience in starting their own summer businesses. This initiative provides hands-on business training and mentoring, together with awards of up to \$3,000.

Small Business Enterprise Centres and other groups help deliver the Summer Company program to students across the province. Locally, the Halton Region Business Development Centre co-ordinates the pro-

gram and delivers it through volunteer business mentoring groups.

Successful applicants are chosen through a competitive process, based on the business plans they submit, their understanding of the business idea and the probability of success.

Once students are accepted for the program, they receive an award of up to \$1,500 in early summer to help with business start-up costs, and a \$1,500 award in the fall after successfully completing the program and returning to school. They also get a minimum of 12 hours of business training and the opportunity to meet with a local community mentoring group for support and advice.

"The young people selected for the Summer Company program will certainly benefit from the guidance, funding, and mentorship they will receive through the program," said Oakville MPP Kevin Flynn. "The program will allow them to develop and apply fundamental entrepreneurial skills that will last a lifetime."

Takhar — appointed to head his newly-created ministry just two months ago — used several statistics to prove that all this effort is worth the trouble: of the 360,000 businesses in Ontario, 99 per cent are considered "small" with 97 per cent of them staffed by less than 100 people. A full 65 to 70 per cent of all new jobs, however, are created by small businesses.

"We encourage entrepreneurship among young people,"

said Takhar. "I am very impressed by young people."

They include Campbellville's Sean Kirk, a Business student at the University of Guelph-Humber, who operates Student Lawscapers, offering lawn and property management services for Milton and area homeowners. The key to Kirk's success was deciding to fill an untapped niche market, namely lawns that are simply too small for larger landscaping companies to bother with.

Good for the economy

As a former small business owner, Flynn praised the graduates and said he fully understands the hard work necessary to run a successful company. Like Takhar, Flynn maintained that offering assistance to young entrepreneurs ultimately helps shape Ontario's economy for the better.

"I make a point of attending this (graduation) every year," he said.

Added Regional Councillor and acting Regional Chair Carol D'Amelio, "These students are among the most ambitious of our community, and I'm pleased to be here to congratulate them on behalf of regional council."

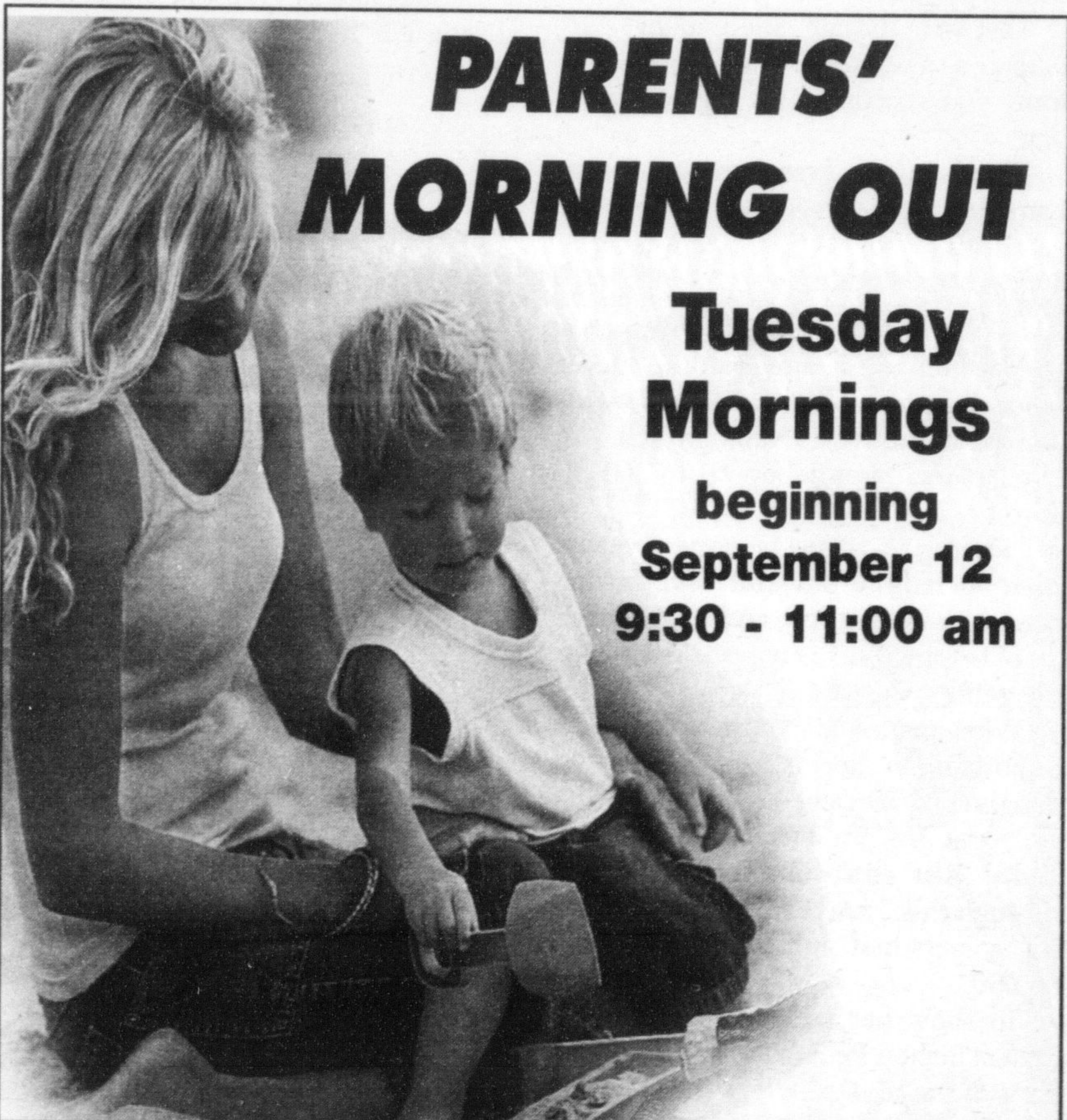
D'Amelio also said the Region is "proud to be a part of building business success in Halton" by nurturing and supporting young entrepreneurs.

Another Milton graduate of the Summer Company program is Christopher Puttock of E. C. Drury High School, who runs Puttock Solutions, a computer consulting business.



LIESA KORTMANN / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

REASON TO SMILE: Participants in the 2006 Summer Company program were more than happy to smile for the camera after a successful season running their own businesses. Burlington Councillor Carol D'Amelio, Ontario Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Harinder Takhar and representatives from the Halton Region Business Development Centre and the Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship celebrated with the student entrepreneurs.



PARENTS' MORNING OUT

Tuesday Mornings

beginning September 12
9:30 - 11:00 am

St. Paul's United Church

- Free Supervised Children's Activities
- Engaging Discussion with other Parents
- Refreshments
- Parenting Information

123 Main Street East

For Registration and Info call
905-878-8895 ext. 29

or email: welcome@stpaulsmilton.org

Improving your odds against Canada's #1 killer



HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO

CONSIDERING A CAREER CHANGE?

Mr. Michael Lee-Chin, founder of the Berkshire group of companies and AIC Ltd., invites you to learn about beginning a career in the investment industry.

Join Mr. Lee-Chin, one of Canada's most successful Financial Advisors, intimate and up-close, as he speaks about his journey of business experiences that led him to this success.

Find out about the Berkshire Difference and the opportunities that await you as a Berkshire Financial Advisor.

BERKSHIRE CAREER NIGHT
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2006

7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.
1375 Kerns Rd, Burlington - Berkshire Head Office

RSVP by: Friday September 8, 2006

By email to: recruiting@berkshire.ca

By telephone 905-331-9900
or toll-free 1-800-991-2121
Extension 3378

For directions, please visit our website at www.berkshire.ca



BERKSHIRE INVESTMENT GROUP INC.
BERKSHIRE SECURITIES INC.
BERKSHIRE INSURANCE SERVICES INC.