



# COMMUNITY

## Teens help kids with homework in 'The Club'

By Stephanie Thiessen  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

As a young boy in school, Brent Trull didn't learn the same way as the other kids.

Diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD), Brent had trouble focusing and found it hard to sit still.

"I had problems paying attention in class," he said.

Fortunately, he had some teachers who allowed him to learn in his own way. A French teacher was particularly helpful; if he had too much pent-up energy, he was permitted to run laps around the school, he said.

Brent also took advantage of a tutoring program, which gave him the extra help he needed with his schoolwork.

Today Brent, 17, is a tutor himself with a new program that was launched last week.

The Club is an after-school homework program of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Halton.

The once-weekly program pairs teen tutors/mentors with children who might not have the opportunity for homework help due to financial reasons or parents working shifts.

The Club is supervised by adult volunteers with teaching, social work or other relevant experience working with kids.

### "Win-win situation"

The program was launched at Our Lady of Victory School last Tuesday and at J.M. Denyes Public School Wednesday. "It's a win/win situation," said Cathy Trautmann, Club co-ordinator for BBBS Halton. "Local teens will earn their community service hours in a really rewarding way and children will have their self-esteem boosted by finally finishing their homework."

The high school volunteers are recruited by BBBS Halton staff, and are encouraged to participate if they have an average higher than 70 per cent. Friendliness and flexibility are also important, said a spokesperson from BBBS Halton.

The Club has been running successfully at a number of Oakville primary schools for more than six years.

Brent's own difficulties learning make him particularly suited for tutoring, he said, because he knows where students who might be having trouble with their homework are coming from.

"It's something I can relate to with the kids," Brent said after the launching ceremony at J.M. Denyes School.

His tutee is nine-year-old Nathaniel, a freckle-faced grade four student who obvi-



**TEEN TUTORS:** Above, Nathaniel, 9, enjoys a fun mathematics card game as Brent Trull — a Milton District High School student — looks on during an after-school session with 'The Club'. At left, fellow Milton District High School student Venesa Vijay tutors nine-year-old Austin in his reading and mathematics.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

ously looks up to Brent.

Asked why he's getting a tutor, Nathaniel said: "I thought it would be fun."

He said Brent will help him with any assignments he's having trouble with.

But The Club is about more than getting homework done, Brent said.

"It's about learning to be with other people, and co-operating, and being a team player," he said.

Although high school students are required to accumulate a certain number of community service hours to graduate, Brent said that's not why he's participating. In fact,

the Milton District High School student already has all his required hours from coaching a lacrosse team.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by Mayor Gord Krantz, who said he's pleased students have this opportunity.

"I get asked a lot why I'm so interested in young people. Do you know why?" he asked the students sitting in front of him.

"Because we're so awesome?" one student asked.

"Because we're the future?" another guessed.

Krantz chuckled and replied: "That's

right. All I'm doing is looking after my future."

The launching of the two Milton Clubs is possible thanks to a three-year grant of \$109,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The Milton Community Fund has also supported the expansion of The Club in Milton. To find out more about volunteering with The Club or other BBBS Halton programs, call (905) 878-8840 or visit [www.bbbsshalton.ca](http://www.bbbsshalton.ca).

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at [sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

# TV COGECO

## Cogeco Cable Channel 14

Truly Local  
Television

[www.cogeco.ca](http://www.cogeco.ca)

NORTH HALTON STUDIO

Laurier Plaza  
500 Laurier Avenue  
Milton, ON L9T 4R3  
905-878-9306