

BUSINESS



BUSINESS CELEBRATIONS: At left, Nicole Banjavcic, 7, shows her ink-covered palms as she prepares to get printed at the Child Find Ontario table set up as part of the recent first anniversary celebrations of the Royal Bank of Canada's Steeles Avenue branch. At right, 18-month-old Lucy Jackson tries out some of the play equipment with some encouragement from mom Jennifer as the two took in the recent grand opening of the Wee Play Children's Centre on Nipissing Road.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION



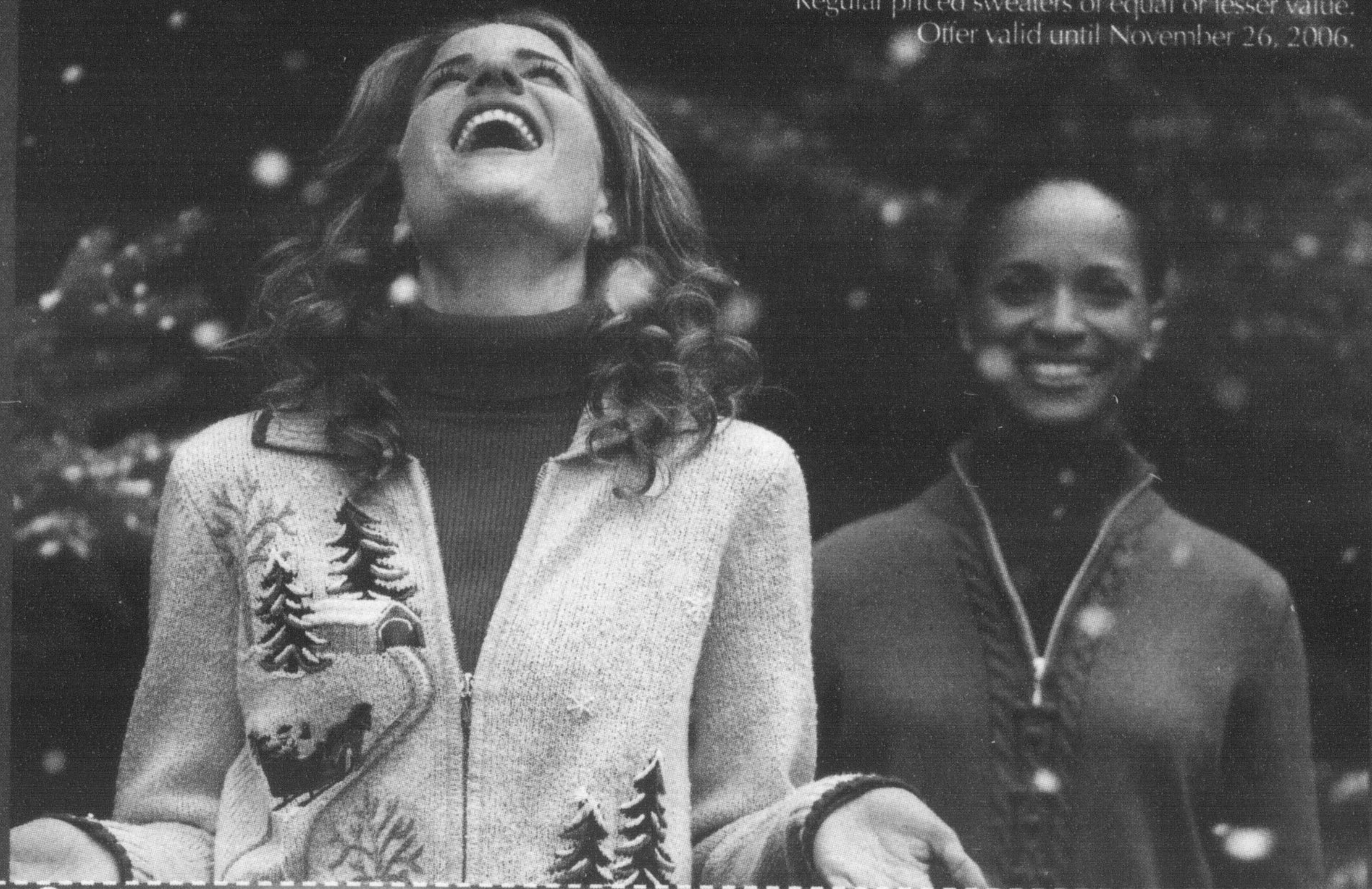
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NORTHERN REFLECTIONS

We get it.

Businesses must have a strong defence: speaker

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Local employers need to "play defence" to stop the good employees they have from leaving for greener pastures.

That was one of the messages Dr. Tim Rutledge delivered to those in attendance at the Halton Industry Education Council's (HIEC) annual Breakfast with the Mayors Wednesday morning.

The session, held at Granite Ridge Golf Club, was attended by dozens of local business people, school board officials, politicians and students who learned more about the changing job market from Rutledge, an employee engagement and retention expert.

Using sports lingo, Rutledge explained that for businesses, playing offence is about recruiting and hiring talented people, while defence focuses on retaining and engaging them.

"Today, we need to view our employees as investments, not costs," he said.

He talked about how the job market is shifting to a "sellers' market," where there are more job vacancies than there are job seekers. "The resumes will not flood in — they will trickle in," he said, noting a sellers' market creates the need to keep good people and "manage the 'Exit' door."

He emphasized that in a sellers' market, supervisory skills are essential.

"Talent will not work for poor supervisors," he said.

Rutledge also discussed how employers can engage their staff, such as by providing flexible work arrangements and recognizing achievements.

He added, "The most important factor in employees' willingness to engage is their feeling about their relationship with their supervisors. You can't afford to have poor managers."

The Breakfast with the Mayors also celebrated HIEC's 17th anniversary.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette said he appreciates the efforts HIEC has made over the years.

"The role of HIEC is extremely important," he said, noting it provides an invaluable service that helps youth prepare for the future.

Mayor Gord Krantz concurred that partnerships like the ones HIEC has formed in the community are crucial.

And Halton Catholic School Board Education Director Lou Piovesan said, "It has been very gratifying to watch this organization continue to grow."

HIEC staff went on to present Terry Murphy of Landscape Ontario with the HIEC Partnership Award.

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