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# COMMUNITY



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAMON BARBOLLA

**MEMORABLE TRIP:** Above, Spanish exchange students gather for a photo during one of their numerous excursions. Below, Gonzalo Martinez meets with Mayor Gord Krantz.

## Milton nice town, say exchange students

*Spanish youth thoroughly enjoy month-long visit*

By Joanna Phillips  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

The students that filled room 102 at Milton District High School last week looked perfectly at home.

It was clear these weren't students here against their will. This classroom didn't have the trappings of detention, or dreaded summer school.

These were 33 exchange students from Spain, ranging in age from 14 to 17, who were more than content to spend an hour in the classroom on this particular day.

Mayor Krantz was paying them a visit, and it was anything but tedious.

Occasionally, he was a little complex — like when his talk took a brief turn to the agricultural sector. But, there was no need to worry. The students, in Canada for a month as part of the Red Leaf summer exchange program, had translators on hand to help them understand.

They'd gotten a lot out of their stay. With less than a week to go, they were able to keep up a friendly banter with the affable mayor.

The students gave him a round of applause when he told them he'd celebrated his 50th wedding anniversary a few weeks prior.

His humour wasn't lost on them either.

"Just in case anyone's wondering how old I am, I was married when I was about four," he joked, cracking up the students.

For the students, venturing to a far-away country has been a fun experience. It's all about learning English, sightseeing and partaking in the culture here.

What 17-year-old Antonio Beltran enjoyed most was the people.

"The people are nice, friendly. Lovely

people, here," he said.

Antonio is from Madrid, Spain — the third largest city in the European Union — so Milton was quite a change of pace for him.

"Milton is a nice town, and I think it's growing... so that's good," he observed.

Antonio and the others stayed with host families in Milton, marking the launch of the Red Leaf program here in town.

The Red Leaf program has been in

Canada, though, for a lot longer. It's welcomed 17,000 students — between the ages of 12 and 18 — into host families since 1989. The students come from Spain and France for a taste of Canadian high school

life — even during the summer.

They spend time in the classroom, improving their English. Co-ordinator Carol Clarke and her team, which included a teacher, personal assistant and two leaders from Spain, assisted the group that just left Milton.

And what an adventurous time they all had.

Their itinerary was a neat parcel of must-see sites. They packed in the CN Tower, Canada's Wonderland, Niagara Falls, Playdium, a Blue Jays game and a four-day excursion in New York. They also explored what Milton had to offer.

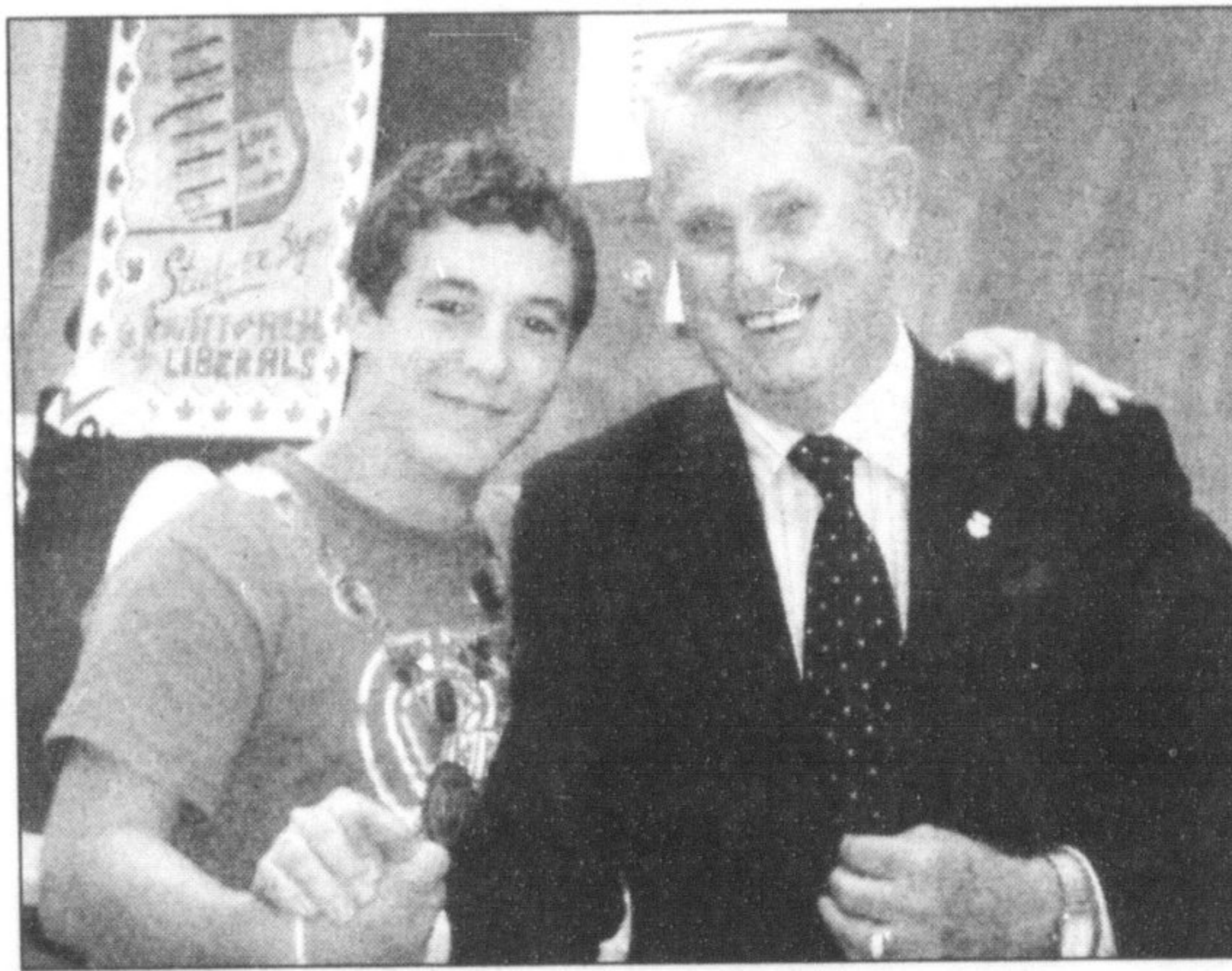
"They went to Kelso Park, which they really enjoyed," said Clarke.

Clarke is pleased with the results of the group's stay here in Milton.

"It was extremely successful. We had no problems at all," she said.

It's apparent the students have walked away with many new experiences — and for some of them, a photo-op with the mayor to show their friends and family back home.

For more information about Red Leaf, including programs offered outside of Canada, visit [www.red-leaf.com](http://www.red-leaf.com).



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