

# COMMUNITY

## Teacher of the Month

# Homeroom teacher goes above and beyond

By Stephanie Hounsell  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Ashley Broadbent was finished with school, or so it seemed.

About a year and-a-half ago, for some reason, she simply decided she wasn't going to go anymore, and it appeared as though there wasn't anything anyone could say to change her mind. But special education teacher Julie Scott-Trask, Broadbent's homeroom teacher, wasn't about to let her student get away without a fight, said Ashley's mom, Helen.

"Julie went above and beyond by coming to our home and gently persisting in letting my daughter know how much she was part of 'the team' and was missed at school," explained Helen.

It wasn't long before Ashley, now 20, decided to give school another try.

### Inspiring change of heart

"Now she loves going to school and connecting with her favourite teacher," Helen wrote to the *Champion*.

Only a parent of a child with special needs can know just how much it means to have a teacher who goes above and beyond the call of duty — a teacher who pours her everything into her students day in, day out, Helen said.

Scott-Trask, she said, is such a teacher.

With Ashley being in her final year at the Drury Centre program at E.C. Drury High School, having been taught for several years by this beloved teacher, there's no better time than now to thank her, Helen wrote in a letter nominating Scott-Trask for Teacher of the Month.

"Julie is a beloved teacher who faces every day with a smile, a tremendous sense of humour and genuine caring for our children," she wrote.

Now in her fourth year teaching at the Drury Centre, Scott-Trask said she feels fortunate to work with her students.



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**SOURCE OF INSPIRATION:** Drury Centre teacher Julie Scott-Trask works with student Ashley Broadbent, whose mother Helen nominated her for Teacher of the Month.

"I'm privileged I have a job I love and can do everyday," she said.

The seven-year Drury Centre program is for teens and young adults aged 14 to 21 with special needs. It's designed to help prepare students for "the real world" as they transition out of school.

Ashley, who has a developmental delay,

has been in Scott-Trask's class for three years now; one of the goals is to give the students as much stability as possible, and that includes keeping the same students with the same teachers as much as possible.

"Having had them for so many years, we have the opportunity to know them from all different angles," Scott-Trask said. "We hit

the ground running every year."

Students of various ages and levels are put together, giving older students a chance to develop leadership skills and mentor the younger students, Scott-Trask said.

In the mornings, students are in their homerooms, learning traditional subjects like reading and math. In the afternoons, classes are mixed up and students learn skills they could apply in the workplace. They might work in the school's café, learn to bake, or take part in activities simulating real-life work scenarios such as stocking shelves or re-stocking DVD shelves in specially set up stations.

Many students also have work placements they attend with an educational assistant.

### Integration important

"We try to get as many students out in the community as possible," said Scott-Trask, who has nine students in her homeroom.

Growing up with a brother with Down syndrome, Scott-Trask has a special understanding of children and youths who learn at their own pace, as well as the concerns and fears their parents have.

Her goal is to build students' confidence, letting them know she believes they can do anything.

"With all students, you've got to let them know you believe in what they're capable of doing," she said.

When a student enters graduation year, Scott-Trask said she treats it like a big celebration, as do the other students. Students love to recognize their fellow students' achievements, she said.

"I do this from my heart. The challenge is to have them be the best they can be and to have them be ready (to graduate) when the time comes."

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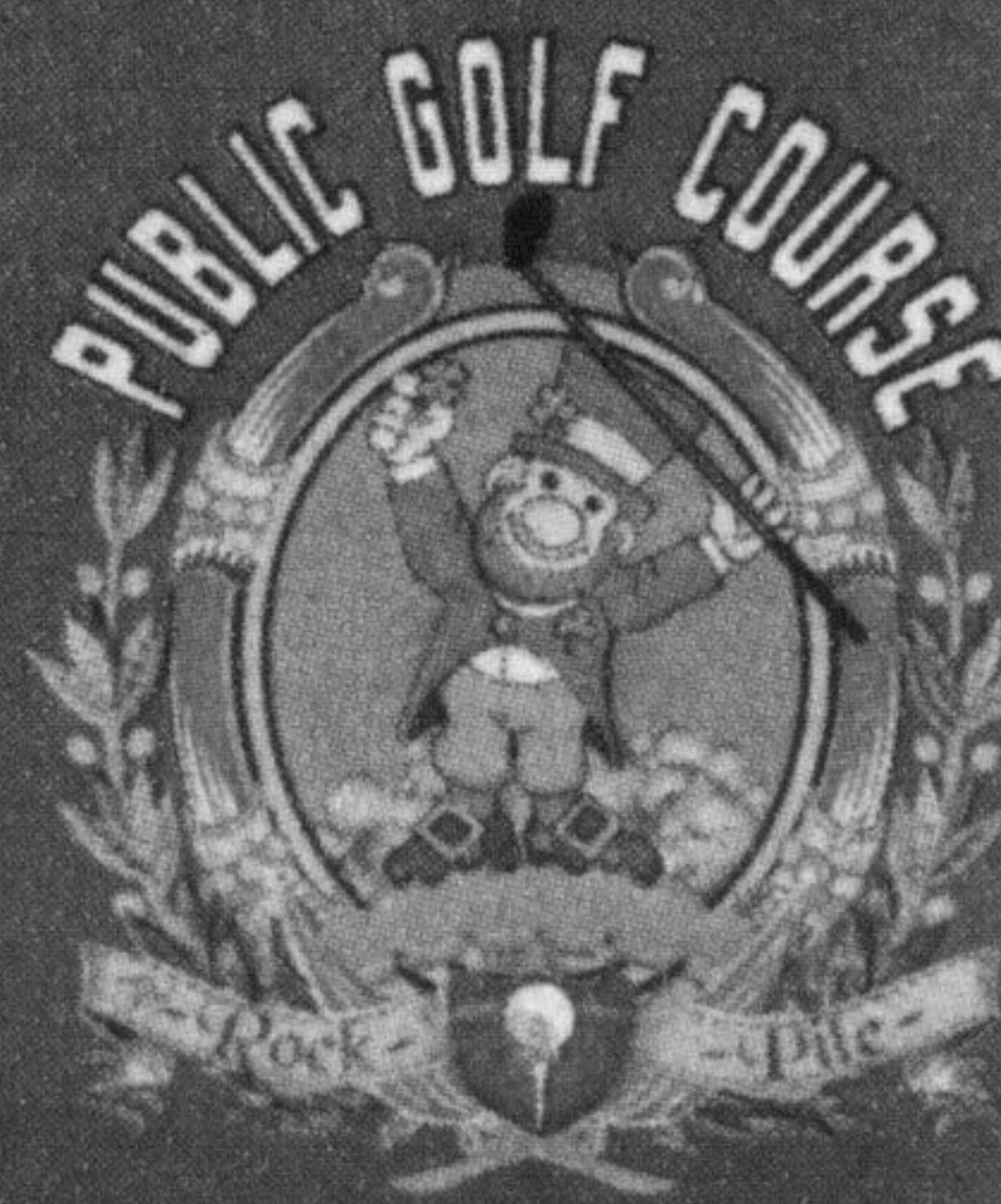
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