

Build Manor volunteer, volunteer, program

Started as a hope, now a reality; 60 helping out

By Jane Muller

What began as a list of staff recommendations has been developed into an organized volunteer program at Halton Centennial Manor with the hiring of volunteer co-ordinator Lorena Smith in January.

The 23-year-old's experience at the Manor actually began in 1973 when she was employed as part time house-keeping and office staff while attending high school in Burlington.

When she and her husband Jeff moved from Milton to Sault Ste. Marie where he trained as a forest technician, Lorena found similar work at a private nursing home.

Her position as a ward attendant was short lived and she moved on to planning activities for residents.

"There is really no course to take in activities that will classify you for everything," Lorena said.

"It was only a 120-bed home and two of us organized all activities and anything to do at all with recreation and volunteers.

"I learned a lot," she said.

An attempt to find work on the west coast last winter after Jeff's forestry training ended, proved fruitless.

"It was the wrong time of year," Lorena recalls.

The pair headed back to Milton in December opting to be nearer their families, to whom they both feel "really close."

Employment prospects were here for both and Jeff began working for Halton Region Conservation Authority while Lorena landed a job as the Manor's first volunteer co-ordinator.

"Everything was started from scratch," she said.

"I started with a list from staff and contacted other centres with volunteers."

Prior to the hiring of a volunteer co-ordinator volunteers would come in on their own and asked what they could do, according to Mrs. Smith. She says when nothing is organized and specific jobs are not outlined, volunteers can lose interest.

So far the response has been excellent, something the co-ordinator is finding hard to believe as a lot of organizations and institutions are calling

for volunteer help. There are 60 volunteers at the Manor now, 30 of those registered during volunteer week when a special recruiting drive was held at the facility for the care of elderly people.

There are three separate volunteer programs including visiting programs for mothers and tots. The third program is organized for those who have at least two hours a week to donate and a choice of job assignments is given.

All volunteers take part in an orientation program including tours, films and instruction regarding communicating with the elderly, dealing with depression, feeding and fire and emergency planning.

Mrs. Smith says there will be volunteers in the building as often as staff are; therefore their fire safety and emergency training must be similar. Volunteers must abide by specific rules which are outlined for them and each wears a light blue vest and name tag.

There is one volunteer at the Manor who began visiting residents about a month ago who doesn't wear a volunteer vest. He is a volunteer, but they have no vests small enough for the two and a half year old.

Robbie Spurgeon and his babysitter Mary Ann Chopra began what is referred to as friendly visiting together and Lorena hopes more will join this pair. Mrs. Chopra has two daughters of her own, one in Grade 2 and another who attends Kindergarten in the morning while she and Robbie visit their newfound friends at the Manor.

"In the summer all of us will be coming," Mrs. Chopra said.

"There are so many housewives in Milton who don't work and have toddlers which is the main reason for not coming out," Lorena suggests.

"There is something about a young face, something about youth that stimulates the old people," said Lorena.

Robbie is a big hit with residents, especially the men who make up only 30 per cent of the institution's population. While the little boy with an irresistible smile provides companionship for residents other volunteers couple this with reading to residents, transporting them to various activities and as Lorena says doing "anything to make residents happy."

The volunteer program will begin soon and will involve local youth probably from the ages of 13 to 16 according to Mrs. Smith, as older teenagers usually take on paying part time jobs. Before the

school term ends for summer, volunteers will be at the Manor from 4 to 7 p.m. but during summer vacation, Lorena hopes to organize three shifts of volunteers a day.

Volunteers work with very little supervision says Lorena and each knows her specific task

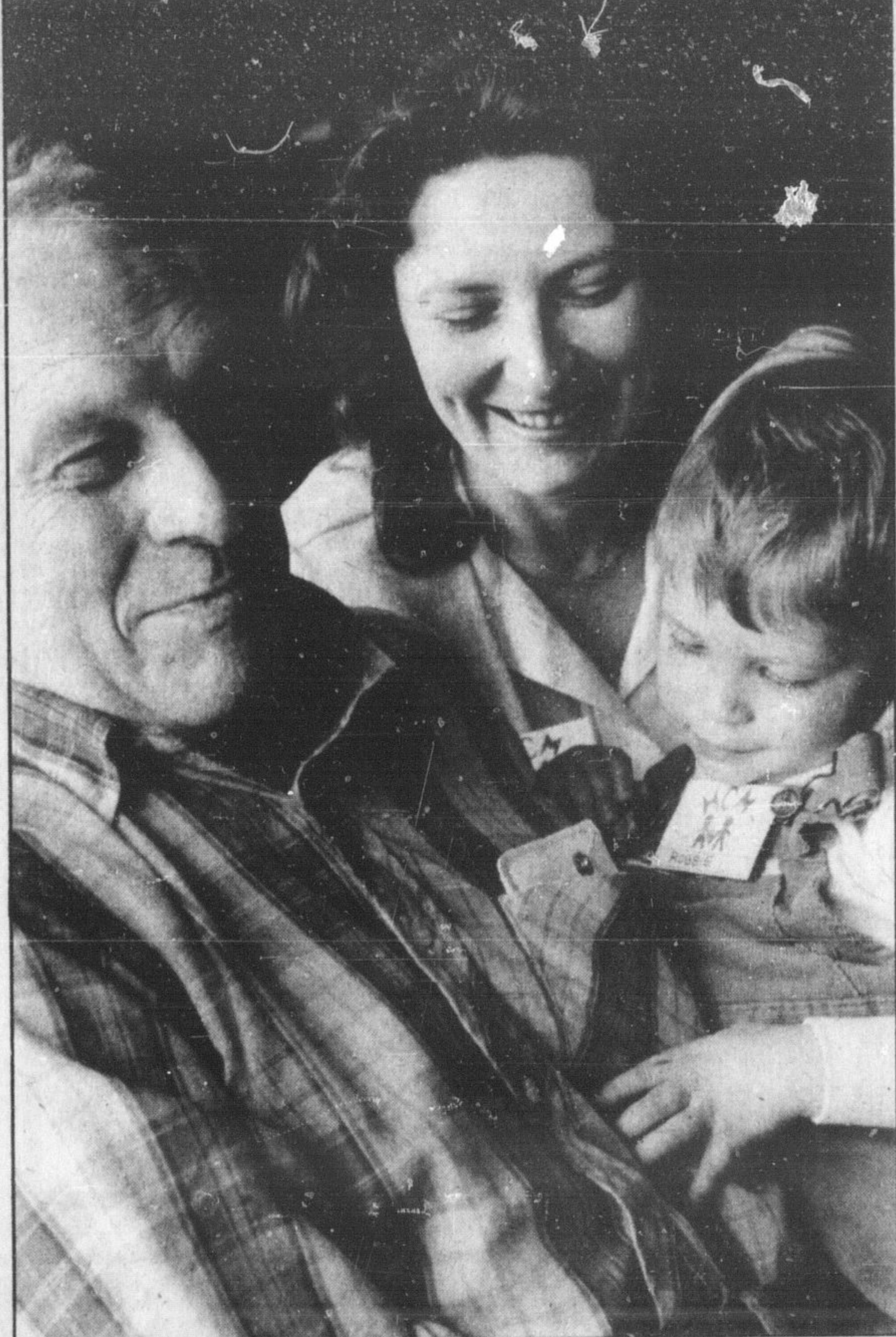
be it transporting volunteers or "floating" through the buildings offering companionship to residents.

All volunteers are interviewed and complete application forms. Lorena tries to match areas of interest with volunteer jobs available.

People from many walks of life are becoming Manor volunteers but they all share an interest in the elderly.

"They are just like staff only they're not paid," Lorena said.

Next year during volunteer week, those who have dedicated their time to serve residents will be recognized for the number of service hours donated at a special thank you banquet.



Delights in youth. Robbie Spurgeon, 2, offers a unique volunteer service to Halton Centennial Manor residents. He and his babysitter Mary Ann Chopra make regular morning visits and among those they are sure to spend time with is Walter Riddell, a Manor resident since 1976.

Milton Choristers cut first record

Milton Choristers have cut a new record — the first for the choir since male singers were added to the former Chansettes.

It was recorded at Milton District High School on May 9, under the direction of director Judy Hunter. Win Newell and Dawn Brodie accompanied the singers as they went through the 11 selections.

A variety of music was recorded, including Healey Willan, Mendelssohn, show tunes, plus an original composition by Becky Windhagen (Mrs. Hunter's sister). Ron Break recorded a Roger Whittaker tune, with guitar accompaniment.

The picture for the record jacket was taken at Ontario Agricultural Museum on April 25. The record should be on sale by the fall.

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Volunteer co-ordinator. Lorena Smith is pleased with the response of the people of Milton who have answered her call for volunteer help at Halton Centennial Manor. Mrs. Smith has established several volunteer programs to make their jobs easier and keep the volunteers interested in their work.

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