

Nutrition gets a nudge during month-long push

We shouldn't feel guilty about eating fast foods once in a while - even community health nutritionists include on occasion.

Hamburgers and french fries have some vitamins and minerals but they also have loads of fat, sodium and calories.

"The nutritional quality of junk food is not bad," explained Halton's community health nutritionist Lynn Gates. She added that it could be better however if fries were cooked in polyunsaturated oil instead of saturated fat and less salt was used.

Those who make a steady diet of fast foods would not score well on a computerized test being offered during the last week of March which is national nutrition month. Halton residents are invited to find out how well they are eating by having their

diets analyzed at the health department. Testing will be conducted between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. the week of March 24. Call Lynn Gates at 827-2151, ext. 251 for an appointment.

Halton's nutritionist is aiming information at students, from day care centres and up.

"Children may be more receptive when they are younger," she explained.

She tries to get the message across to teenagers by playing up the importance of good diet in the way we look. This idea is reflected in the month-long campaign's theme "Eat well - Live well". Tell a teenager that french fries and fatty foods promote pimples and they listen. Young men "get hooked" into considering nutrition when fitness is introduced first, according to Ms. Gates.

"We should focus on fitness as well as nutrition," she said.

The nutritionist admits people in her profession are "great at giving out information".

"It's attitude that we have to work on. We don't always know how to motivate people."

The Canadian Cancer Society has recently revealed that 35 per cent of

cancers can be attributed to diet and lifestyle. Heart disease can be attributed to lifestyle as well but Ms. Gates said smokers are aware of a definite relationship between their habit and lung cancer but continue to smoke.

"Scare tactics work with certain types of people. Some rely on fate and take no responsibility towards their own health," the nutritionist suggested.

For about the last decade, interest in health has increased. Ms. Gates said prevention rather than treatment is the focus. Food companies and fast food outlets have not ignored this heightened consciousness. Low sodium, low fat and low calorie products have been introduced. Salad bars and new light menus are

available at many fast food restaurants.

A pilot project has been introduced in "high risk" areas of Ottawa-Carleton which provides free breakfasts to children in their schools. "Maybe that's what it takes" to ensure they are eating properly, Ms. Gates contends.

"When children get older and eat at school who tells them what to eat at lunch? Kids are in more control now with so many working parents," she said.

This, according to the nutritionist, is a good reason to get nutrition information to students. The study of diet has been moved to health and physical education courses from home economics programs which in the past reached only female students.

Thanks to the maple festival a Crawford Lake attraction

What better place to learn the ways of native Indians than at Crawford Lake? At this time of year, the former residents of that area were busy turning sap into sugar.

"Thanks to the Maple Festival" is being presented at the Indian village and conservation area weekends and holidays, until April 20. Demonstrations are conducted each hour and in-

clude a tour of the 1500 AD Neutral Indian longhouse.

A visit to the area should include a walk around the boardwalk which surrounds the lake. There are also films and exhibits at the interpretive centre. Crawford Lake is located on Guelph Line. For more information call the Halton Region Conservation Authority at 878-4131.



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There's a NEW PAPER
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Foster parents for eligible puppies

By JANE MULLER
Champion Reporter

Until three weeks ago, Janus's life was fairly normal. Besides not being allowed to chase balls or jump on people, he carried on as most puppies do during their first year.

Janus was special and not just in the way his foster family saw him through their loving eyes. The Chamberlains, a Milton family who adopted him nine months ago, were puppy raisers. A new breed of volunteers in Canada, they keep puppies only until they are ready to be trained as dog guides for the blind.

"It was a great learning experience for the children," said Ina Chamberlain.

She and her husband Barry and children Julie, 10 and Chris, 11, are now dealing with separation. The kids won't allow Janus's cage in the kitchen to be taken down and the family half-heartedly hopes he will fall at school and be returned to them. The odds of that happening are quite slim, according to German shepherd's trainers at Canine Vision Canada, Oakville.

Apprentice trainer Lorraine Unkrig said, "He's very smart." Director of training, Larry DePugh is "fairly sure" Janus will graduate after the three-month training period. Some dogs have to repeat the course while others are forced to drop out. Janus is among 20 dog

guides being trained for the next class of 12 blind students.

Not only must the dogs be suited as guides, they must match with their new owners' physique, personalities and home environments. This is the reason the dogs outnumber students. Along with German shepherds like Janus, Labrador retrievers and gold and black Labradours are used at Canada's first dog guide school.

A calm disposition is important in a dog guide. The list of puppy "don'ts" which raisers receive includes cautions about encouraging the pup to bark, jump on people or bite while playing. Pups are tested before they are selected but these tests are no guarantee of a dog's success in the program, according to Mr. DePugh.

The pups are examined for physical soundness at eight months of age and begin serious training when they are about a year old, depending on individual maturity. Most dogs take a couple of weeks to adjust to life at the school. They are relegated to one of 44 cages and must learn the kennel routine.

Janus's foster family chose to "crate train" him. His crate or cage, was his bed and kept him under control when left at home alone. Ina felt it would help him adjust to the school more easily. Lorraine agrees, saying dogs not trained in this manner often whine in their pens.

She and the other trainers work five or six dogs a day, taking them about three miles each. Dogs in harnesses being lead by their trainers have become a familiar sight on the streets surrounding the school located at Kerr and Bebeca St.

"At first the dogs just think they're

For Janus and his blind owner, grooming will be part of a daily routine. Dog trainer apprentice Lorraine Unkrig brushes his coat after a brisk morning walk. The process of grooming gives the blind dog owners a chance to check for lumps or other abnormalities and judging by Janus's reaction, dogs get a chance for a rest.



Working dogs Guiding is a way of life

"The love of the blind person who gets Janus will far exceed the frivolous love of four Chamberlains." - Ina Chamberlain, puppy raiser.



There is now work involved when Janus goes for a walk. Here he reacts to the go ahead sign from his trainer Lorraine Unkrig. Head trainer, Larry DePugh can be seen walking behind the two students (above). When entering the kennel at Canine Vision Canada, visitors are greeted by Cujo, a large German Shepherd, whose curiosity brings his head through the top of his pen.

Photos by JON BORGSTROM



out for a walk," explained Mr. DePugh.

At one point, which varies with each dog, something clicks and the dog realizes it is being used as a guide. These working dogs must be eager to learn, although it may not be apparent right away. Janus's morning walks in Oakville differ from those he took in his home town.

Lorraine makes a forward motion with her hand and gives verbal directions as they begin to move. She makes Janus stop at curbs, go around obstacles and keep his head faced forward. The Chamberlains, like good parents, instilled doggy manners in Janus with obedience training. He didn't just learn to heel, however. As a potential guide dog, Janus had to

be exposed to many environments, several of which are off limits to regular dogs.

Ina praised the cooperation she received at the mall, a local grocery store and the GO station. Attired in his dog guide in training shirt, Janus attracted plenty of attention at locations normally off-limits to canines.

Although she and her family do not regret fostering Janus, it will not be something they will do again. Some puppy raisers have offered to foster a second pup, but Ina said the family isn't emotionally strong enough.

"You can't help falling in love with him," said Ina of the dog she fostered.

The Chamberlains have a collection of photographs of Janus and they

have their memories.

"I have reservations about seeing him graduate," Ina explained.

She expects her husband will be at the ceremony which should take place in May or June. Janus will likely be graduating with a tall man who does a lot of walking, according to Mr. DePugh. The dog's height, the speed of his walk and a shepherd's need of plenty of exercise, drew the trainer to this conclusion. Less than 10 per cent of blind people use dog guides, a figure Mr. DePugh expects will rise now that Canada has its own school. Of those who want guide dogs, not all qualify. Mr. DePugh interviews prospective students, assessing their physical ability. Students stay at the school for a month, training

with their dogs. The \$5,600 "tuition" is covered by the Lions Foundation, the project's sponsoring charity.

Students may return to the school with their dogs for brush-up training. This is sometimes necessary if the dog guide user gets sick and is unable to use the dog for a while.

When the school grows to include 30 trainers, there will always be students in training. The need for puppy raisers is bound to increase as more blind people want dog guides. All medical expenses are covered and Purina supplies food at no charge. And there is always a chance the dog won't make the grade, giving foster families a chance to be adoptive parents.

Ina Chamberlain comforts herself with this thought. "The love of the blind person who gets Janus will far exceed the frivolous love of four Chamberlains."