

Misty becomes celebrity for Easter Seals

By JANE MULLER
Champion Reporter

It wasn't until her daughter Misty was four-months-old that Carol Pritchett noticed there was something wrong.

While Misty's twin sister Becky would lift herself up with her arms, Misty would not attempt it.

"When Misty got older she started crying a lot," Carol explained.

The mother of the two girls remembers Becky being born with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck. She was the smaller of the two, weighing one pound less than her sister at two-and-a-half-pounds. Carol doesn't think those in the delivery room realized that Misty had suffered brain damage.

The experts don't know to what point children with cerebral palsy can develop. Already Misty has "come such a long way". These days the little girl, who will turn seven next month, is a local celebrity. She has been selected by the Rotary Club of Milton to represent handicapped children in the area during the Easter Seals Society fund drive.

Misty will be guest of honour at the annual Easter Seals dinner and dance at the Optimist Club. Her sister and parents, David and Carol along with her grandparents and friends of the family will be there to mark the occasion. The youngster is most excited about getting her picture in the newspaper and attending a dinner in her honour.

Misty began her formal education at the pre-school program at Credit Valley Treatment Centre, Mississauga. Carol discovered she had been on the right track with Misty, having done many of the things at home that Misty was experiencing at the centre.

"They would ask me if I could try something but I was usually ahead of them," said the full-time mom.

In September, Misty started going to Martin St. School, the same school Becky attends.

"I was sort of nervous as to how the kids would react," Carol recalls.

The reception her handicapped daughter received made her "really feel good" however. "Kids can be mean but they are really good with Misty."



Misty Pritchett (right) has been looking forward to having her picture appear in the newspaper. She knew this would come with her celebrity status since she was

selected by the Rotary Club of Milton to represent handicapped children in the area during the Easter Seals campaign. Giving Misty a hug is her twin sister Becky.

At Martin St. she is part of a six-member special education class. Formerly being exposed to non-verbal classmates at Credit Valley, her new situation has made her more talkative.

"She loves it there. Every morning she wakes up and asks if it's time to go to school," Carol said.

Two years ago Misty became mobile through the use of a walker. Misty was given a taste of freedom, of independence. Like most children, this is something for which she strives. She wants to do things on her own. It took Carol a couple of years before she stopped doing everything for Misty.

"I can remember when she couldn't feed herself," she said.

Carol has watched the frustration Misty experiences when trying to do something which comes so easily for Becky. Misty's temper has flared. There are other times when she brings much joy to her family. "She makes you laugh."

One day Misty's uncle was dressing her and when he asked her to help she said she couldn't because she's handicapped. His niece was teasing him - it's not like Misty to say she can't do something.

"There's something about Misty that says she's going to do it," said

her mother.

Carol explained she is close to the twins. She devoted her time to them and gave Misty extra stimulation.

"I talked to her and talked to her."

Misty loves to be outside when the weather is warm. Her favourite summer activity is spraying the neighbourhood kids with the hose as they run by. Those fond memories of watching Misty play are accompanied with some sadness on Carol's part. She wishes Misty could be running with them.

One operation has been performed on Misty's legs to lengthen the tendons. As a result they aren't as stiff as they were and someday she could be fitted with braces to help her walk. A therapist from Credit Valley visits her twice a week at school.

"Myself, I'd like to get the braces on her now but I have to listen to what they say and they say not right now," Carol explained.

Misty weighs about 40 pounds and her mother claims she's not too heavy to carry. Becky got in the habit of pulling her sister along at an early age and Misty can crawl wherever she wants to go when she's out of her freedom-giving walker.

Her mother describes Misty this way, "She's a good little kid. I don't know what I'd do without her."

Successful trip to zone games

March is Junior Farmers' month and it finds the Halton group busy with activities as usual.

The Halton banquet was held Saturday, Feb. 1 at the UAW hall in Milton. The induction ceremony of the new executive for 1986 took place. This year's committee consists of: past president, Doug Howden; president, Roy Fish; first vice-president, Kathy Wettlaufer; second vice-president, Marty Opsteen; provincial director, Ross Fish; alternate provincial director, Pat Wagner; secretary, Sue Livingston; treasurer, Ed Terpstra; Ag. contact, Keith Wettlaufer; sports director, Judy Marlow; press reporter, Julie Austin; newsletter editor, Mary Rushton; county directors: Gary Vanderhyden, Jeff Stephenson, Al Hardiman and John Hardiman.

Halton tied for first place in the Zone Three Winter Games held at the University of Guelph in January. There will be a mixed broomball tournament on Saturday, Mar. 29 in Dufferin County. Anyone interested in playing should contact Judy Marlow at 845-6223. On Saturday, Apr. 5 in North Niagara County is a hockey tournament. If you would like to play, contact Pete Terpstra at 824-0886 if you would like to participate.

Halton Junior Farmers held a Hawaiian dance on Saturday, Mar. 8 at the Canadian Legion in Milton.

April is membership month. Anyone interested in joining or renewing the yearly membership please contact Sue Livingston. The deadline is Thursday, Apr. 17.

Culturama is held once a year in April with interesting events such as



a play competition, spelling bee and the "farmers' feud". This year it is held in Stratford on Saturday, Apr. 5. Everyone is welcome to attend this event. Ross Fish is the contact.

We hope that more people become involved in the Halton Junior Farmers. Our motto is "self help and community betterment, and we, the executive extend our hand in helping you become more involved with Junior Farmers."

Security for seniors not reaching hundreds

Tele-Touch, a daily telephone contact service for seniors operating in Hamilton, Wentworth and Burlington, has saved more than 10 lives in the past 10 years. The service is now being offered in north Halton.

"There have been cases where a person has been on the floor and could not get to the phone," said Eunice McGowan, Acting Executive Director for Halton Helping Hands, the agency administering the service in north Halton. "A Tele-Touch volunteer caller would have put the emergency procedure in operation, and saved a life."

The service which provides some relief from the loneliness that shut-in seniors and the handicapped experience, is also a life-saving contact.

Tele-Touch presently has more than 600 volunteers who telephone people on a pre-arranged day at a set time. If the caller can't connect with the person fielding the call, an emergency situation is presumed.

"The person knows that someone

will be in touch every day that they have specified," said Ms McGowan.

She estimates that approximately 40 per cent of the senior population really need this kind of free service. In Milton alone more than 500 seniors could make good use of Tele-Touch.

Tele-Touch is looking for volunteer callers, they don't have to meet any special qualifications. The service has had success with volunteers of all ages in the past. Interested clients and volunteers in north Halton should call 878-6403 and a Tele-Touch staff person will return their call.

Volunteers will be trained to set the emergency procedure in motion if they cannot reach the client at the agreed-upon time. First they would contact the local hospital for patient information, then contact the next door neighbour, superintendent or next of kin. If they could not locate the client through these two avenues they would call the V.O.N. or the client's doctor. The last resort would be the police.

Steering drivers away from intoxication

Only two of thirty managers of licensed establishments in Milton have responded to a program which could help reduce the incidents of impaired driving.

The server intervention program educates those who serve liquor to know the signs of intoxication and to steer potential drunk drivers away from alcoholic drinks. A three-hour session has been arranged for Monday, Mar. 24 at the Muddy Duck banquet hall. Organizers, members of Milton Community Action Group on Drinking and Driving, chose Monday as it is a slow day for the hospitality industry.

Apparently this consideration has not been enough to attract participants. According to action group chairman, Carol Stoveken, the program will be presented despite the limited reaction by local establishments. Considering the

liability such establishments can face as a result of customers becoming impaired and causing an accident, Mrs. Stoveken cannot understand why response has been so low.

The program is a new one, developed by the Addiction Research Foundation. Monday will be the first time it has been presented to representatives of numerous establishments at the same time. Staffs of two large Toronto hotels and servers at some universities have received the training.

There is still time to register for the program which will run from 7 to 9 p.m. at a cost of \$3 per participant. The fee covers training manuals which are provided. The action group must know how many to expect as refreshments must be ordered. Contact Darlene at town hall, 878-7211, to register.

Easter Seals dance tickets ready

Tickets are now available for the annual Easter Seals dinner-dance sponsored by the Rotary Club of Milton.

The event will be held at the Optimist Centre, Saturday, Apr. 12 in honour of Misty Pritchett, this year's "Tammy". In the past more than 150 attend the dinner and dance. Proceeds help the Rotary Club reach the Easter Seals campaign goal of \$11,500. Easter Seals, mailed to 12,000 Milton households earlier this month are expected to generate funds to help reach the goal.

Last year the goal of \$10,000 was ex-

ceeded. Funds are spent locally to purchase assistive devices for handicapped children living in Milton. The Ontario society receives some of the money which helps pay for the district nurse who works with local handicapped children. A wheelchair was purchased by the Rotary Club for our "Tammy" through Easter Seals donations.

Tickets are available from Rotary Club members at \$40 per couple. They may also be obtained by calling Robert Scott at 878-1526 or Reis Boers at 878-4693.

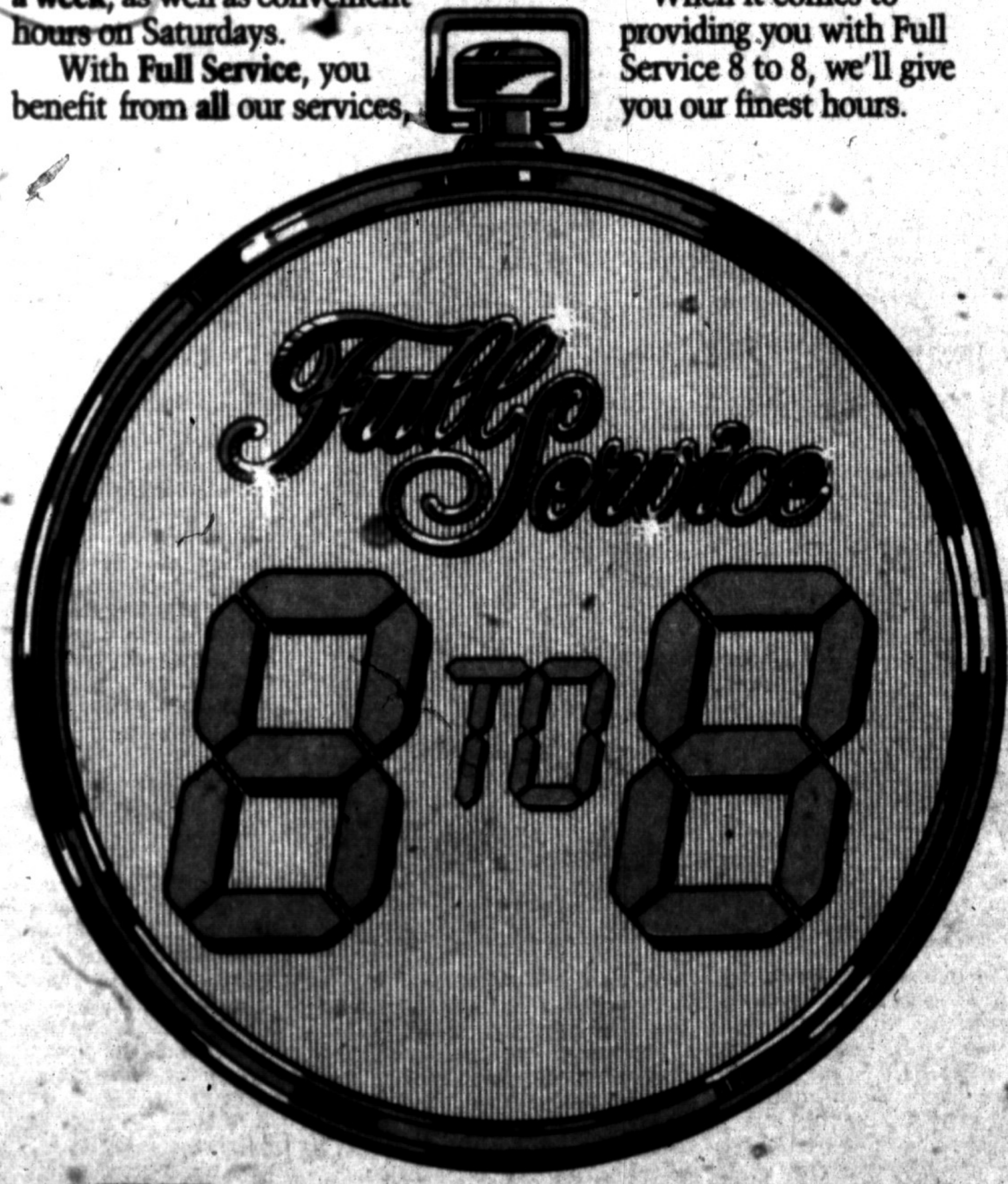
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