Private program teaches math skills Japanese style

By ANGELA BLACKBURN The Champion

Math may not be everyone's favourite subject but it doesn't have to be scary.

At least not with the Japanese Kumon learning method which brings back a traditional approach.

"It's a return to basics and beyond. It gets back to discipline, independent study skills and the development of attention spans," explains Bev Paul, who is opening a Kumon Centre in Milton this month.

Ms Paul has operated a centre in become a household word," she said. Oakville for a year and will take over

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the one that first opened its doors here late last spring.

Parents, and children attended an open house Tuesday at the 900 Nipissing Road facility.

Repetition, key to the Kumon method, cements building blocks necessary for learning and eventual

Ms Paul, an educator for 30 years, recently left the Hamilton-Wentworth Board of Education as a special education instructor to turn fulltime attention to her Kumon franchises. "I'd really like Kumon to

"In my own experience in teaching,

I did see children whose math skills were extremely weak. They could be bright children, yet they had weak computational skills. There's a lot of concern from parents about math programs in schools, that children aren't learning the basics when they're young and the gaps in learning can make it difficult for them to cope with math in high school," she said.

Kumon isn't "a quick fix" nor tutoring, said Ms Paul. "It isn't meant to replace school curriculum but complement it."

son's math proficiency.

Japanese immigrants brought New students are given a diagnos-Institute of Canada Inc. says the method is now used by almost two million children in 27 countries. In Canada, over 16,000 students are enrolled in 180 centres.

Ms Paul's Milton centre will operate two days a week, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.,

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Evenings 7:00 & 9:00 p.m.

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Bev Paul

It's designed for those aged 4 to 15, work then leave with homework, to operated by instructors qualified by and was developed in 1958 in Osaka, be corrected by parents and returned the national institute. Tuition is \$60 Japan by Toru Kumon, a high school on the next visit. Homework consists per month plus a one-time \$40 enrolmath teacher concerned about his of numerous worksheets to take ment fee. approximately 20 minutes every day.

Kumon to North America a decade tic test and usually started in a level ago. The Kumon Educational below their ability. "We want them to experience success right away," said Ms Paul.

> Then they work independently, at levels from pre-school to university. said. For information call 338-9720.

Each level contains about 20 booklets of 200 worksheets. Students must complete each and attain success in a timed test on the work before moving to the next level.

"Kumon doesn't feel a student has truly mastered it until they've mastered it within a time frame," said Ms Paul. "We want the mastery so it becomes automatic," she explained.

The repetitive nature of the Kumon method also develops discipline and good study habits, said Ms Paul.

Kumon centres are franchised and

Math skills, like those involved in sports or music, come with "practice, practice, practice," said Ms Paul. But is it popular with students? Ms Paul said Kumon requires both parental and student commitment.

"Once students realize their their own pace, on Kumon work- improvement, they are less apt to sheets, standard the world over, for make a fuss about the repetition," she

as a drop-in centre. Students are Lesley sings at Stratford encouraged to visit twice a week, to

Local vocalist Lesley Andrew will perform Sunday at the Stratford City Hall Auditorium.

The well-known soprano will be accompanied by baritone David Playfair and pianist Che Anne Loewen in the 7 p.m. concert. Bach, Bernstein, Mendelssohn and Menotti will be featured.

A second performance will take the stage Thursday, October 20, same time, same place. Judy Hunter will be the pianist. The concert will include Barber, Chausson, Hundley and Ravel.

Tickets cost \$12 at the door or \$10 in advance by calling the Stratford Festival box office at 273-1600.

Proceeds go to the Teachers-



Leslie Andrew

Festival Liaison Council's video project 'Arts: Food for the Soul.'



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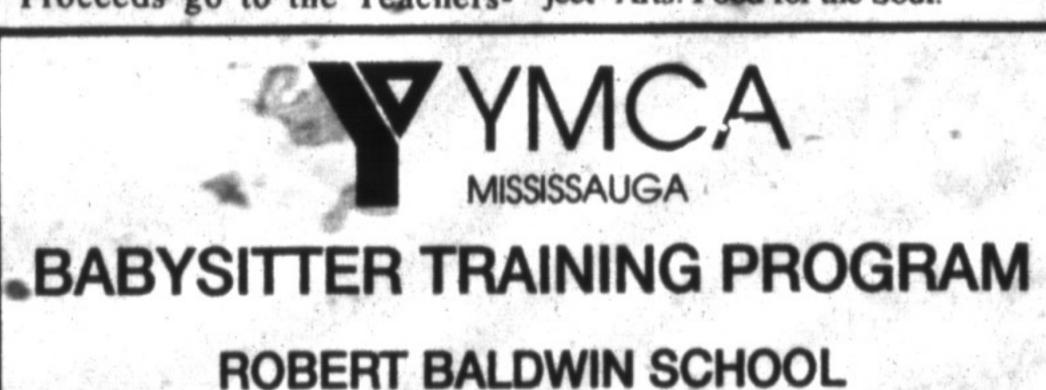
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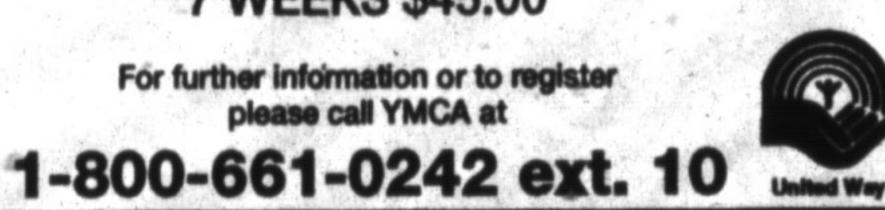
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