

Shop Milton First for ...

Community

February 1996 issue

Milton Mall Merchants Monthly Publication

4th publication

See five Valentine's winners inside!!

Feature Provided by

Milton Youth Drop-In Centre

She looked like any one of the young girls who had attended our youth group at church over the last couple of years. About 14 or 15, she had blond hair and a pretty face. I don't know her name, and I didn't really talk with her. She was sitting on a stone wall next to a wine store on Church Street in downtown Toronto. The sleeping bag that was wrapped around her was visibly wet from the previous night's rain, but she smiled as she asked one of the guys I was with for a bit of change. I glanced into her eyes expecting to see her strung out on coke or heroine, but she was surprisingly sober, just very wet and cold.

I didn't ask about her, I didn't have to. She was about the twelfth street kid we had passed in as many minutes of walking. And I could guess her background. For the most part these kids come from middle class to well-to-do families that live in comfortable suburbs like Milton. There are about 10 to 15 thousand kids on the streets in Toronto during the winter and another 5000 join them over the summer. They come to "the City" looking for fun and excitement. The city has great sex appeal. Instead they find addiction and abuse. Many of these kids turn to prostitution for their drug and food money. They are lonely and ashamed. Even harder than kicking their addictions and escaping the streets is believing that someone can be trusted enough to care for them again.

Over the next year thousands of teens living in nice homes in comfortable towns like Milton will leave to try and find acceptance and love on the streets of Toronto. As of March 1st we will have an option to offer these kids - the Youth Drop-In Centre on Mill Street.

Spearheaded by the churches and strongly supported by the service clubs and businesses in town, the Youth Centre will be an expression of Christian love to the teens of Milton. The Centre will be staffed by volunteers from Milton churches, but for teens it will be a place they can call

their own. Pool, ping pong, foosball, air hockey and a non-profit cafe will give them a chance to interact with their friends. Couches, a study room and computers will allow them to do homework, surf the net, or just hang out. The centre will also include a stage for youth in local bands to showcase their music in front of their friends.

Last summer the Centre ran a basketball night at the corner of Main and Ontario on the Milton mall parking lot. This was an extremely popular event and is a good indication of the support for the Centre within the Milton community. The Centre will continue this tradition in the summer months by holding basketball, in-line skating, and skate boarding on the shopping Centre's parking lot. Ultimately, however, it will be the long-term relationships that develop between teens and caring volunteers that make the difference between staying home and ending up on the streets. Youth need more than programs or activities. They need real people who will love and accept them no matter who they are or what they are involved in.

Targeting teens aged 13-19, the Drop-in program is closely modeled on the successful Drop-In Centre at Meadowvale Town Centre, and similar programs in Woodstock, London and Tillsonburg. In all of these communities, the response to the drop-ins has been overwhelmingly positive. Woodstock has seen a marked reduction of teens loitering downtown and complaining about a lack of things to do on the weekends. The Meadowvale Town Centre named the "Dam", is visited by between 200 and 300 teens every day, and over 500 different teens per week. Many other malls and communities are inquiring about how to start similar programs.

In each of these successful cases, as well as the Youth Centre on Mill Street, the difference will be the people who are volunteering their time. According to Gus Scaiano, a volunteer supervisor, "We are a Christian organization, and we want to love these kids with the unconditional and accept-

Word From Mall Management...

Dear Miltonians,

Smoke Free Mall March 4, 1996

In January we announced that effective, March 4th, the Milton Mall will become Smoke Free in the Food Court for a three month trial period. The decision of staying smoke free will be determined by the customers response, and at this point in time we have had a very positive response. During the three month trial there will be a mail box set up in the food court for customers opinions of the Smoke Free environment. Please note, that any responses under the age of eighteen, or without the correct mailing address will not be considered.

Please remember that this is a Community Shopping Centre and we pride ourselves on meeting our community needs, therefore the decision of Milton Mall becoming Smoke Free will be based on the majority of our patrons.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the Milton Mall.

Yours truly,


Marion Shannon
Mall Manager

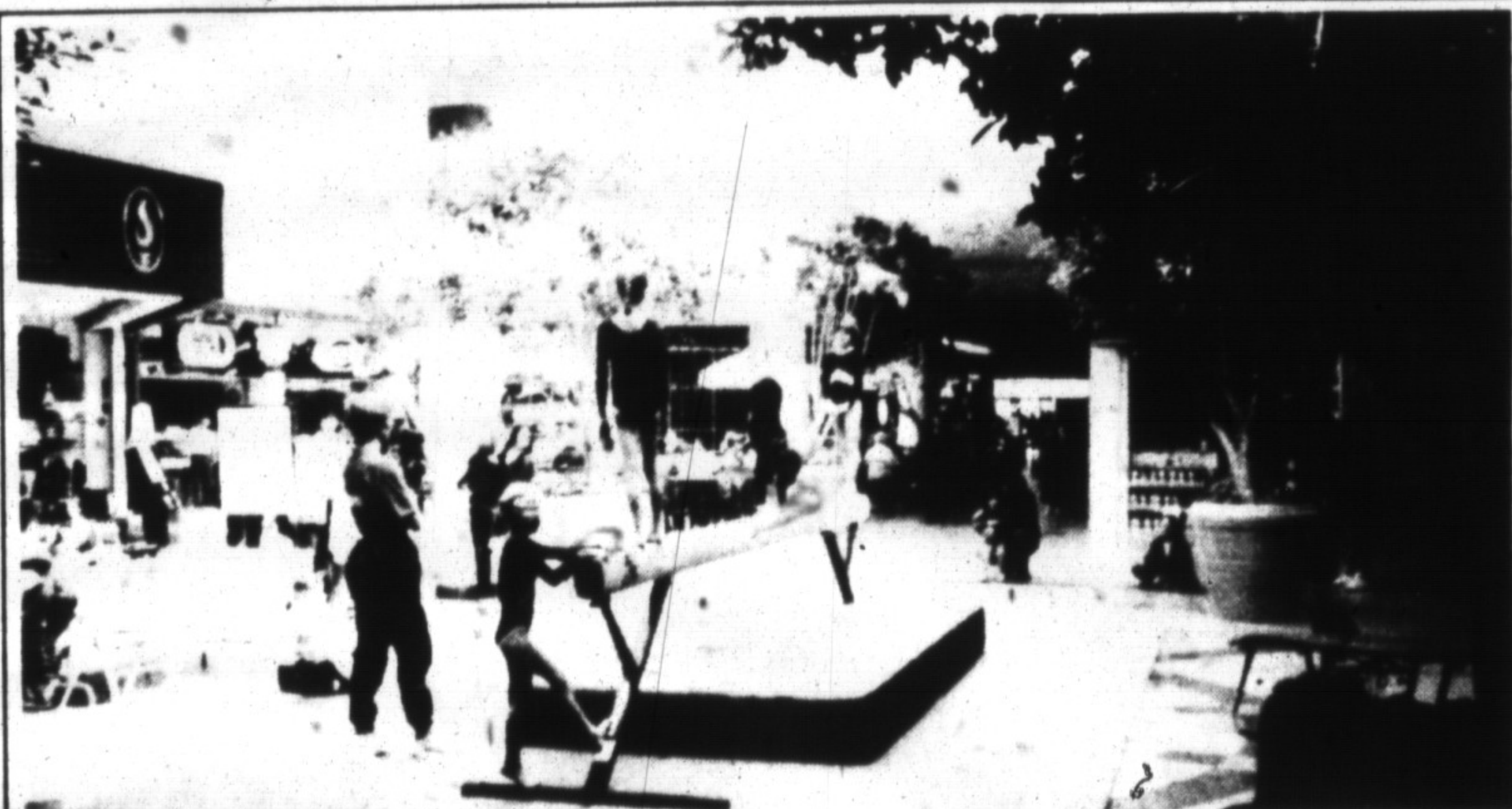
P.S. The renovations for the new stores Bootlegger, Ricki's and Cleo are moving very quickly. Plans for the new stores opening are now scheduled for late March.

ing love of Jesus. It's not about religion or denominational differences, it's about healing through pouring out your life into someone else's. Relationships are not the means to an end, relationships are the whole point of the Drop In Centre."

The Mill St. Drop-In Centre will be open 4:00 pm to 10:30 pm on Friday evening initially, with expanded hours coming quickly after opening. **The Grand Opening will be next Thursday, February 29 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm with Ted**

Chudleigh, Bonnie Brown and our mayor Gord Krantz in attendance. We want to invite everyone in Milton to come out to the Centre on this special evening.

On Friday, March 1st the Centre will hold its opening party for the teens of Milton with lots of pizza and music from 10 am to 11 pm. And finally, on Saturday, March 2 all parents and interested community members are invited to come and have a tour of the Centre between the hours of 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.



Annual Sports Registration held February 9 & 10

Community Calendar

The following schedule of groups will be in the mall the month of March:

Milton Youth Soccer	Mar. 1&2
Milton Tennis Club	Mar. 1&2
Seniors Day	Mar. 4
Adult Education Board	Mar 4&5
Milton Teen Odesey Centre	Mar. 2
A Cappella Showcase	Mar. 2
Harmony Awareness Week	Mar: 3-11
Rotary Club	Mar.16
Cancer Society	Mar. 28-30
Wellness Fair	Mar. 30



MILTON MALL

55 Ontario Street South, Milton (905) 878-3900

OPEN DAILY
Monday - Friday
9:30 - 9:00
Saturday
9:30 - 6:00
Sunday
Noon - 5:00