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NEWSLINES

Ag minister is speaking here

Ontario Minister of Agriculture Noble Villeneuve will speak at Milton's Quality Inn on March 27.

Mr. Villeneuve will be the keynote speaker at the annual general meeting of Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. (OAFE).

"The partnership and support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has been crucial in the success of educating Ontario's young people about a very fundamental part of our society and the career opportunities waiting for them in the economically important agri-food industry," said OAFE Chair Linda Hruska.

The general session will be followed by two workshops. The first will examine the development of classroom resources and the role of the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training's common curriculum.

The second workshop will use a variety of notable established events as practical examples for planning successful agri-food educational events. For further information and registration call Bev Holloway at (905) 878-1510. There is a \$25 registration fee.

Kids day out for creative mornings

Children aged 6-12 are invited to Milton Children and Youth Centre from March 18 through 22 from 9-11 a.m. for Creative Mornings.

The program will run different events each day including: Monday - crafts for kids; Tuesday - science olympics; Wednesday - crafts for kids; Thursday - Lego Building contest, and Friday - snowshoeing and hiking.

Early registration is recommended as space is limited. The fee is \$10 per child, per session. Call Eilidh McLellan at 876-1244 to reserve your space.



Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

A volunteer lab technician helps Corrine Buisman (left) donate blood to be tested for bone marrow compatibility with Deidre Scholtz, a local five year old who requires a lifesaving bone marrow transplant. People gathered in the cafeteria for the first orientation session of the day (above).

More than 2,000 pack school to help ill child

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

From nurses to janitors to bus drivers, thousands of people pitched in Sunday to help the parents of Deidre Scholtz find a bone marrow match for their ill five-year-old daughter.

While 2,003 people waited for more than two hours to give blood samples, workers contributed to the cause by driving patrons in a shuttle bus from Milton Mall to the clinic at Bishop Reding Secondary School, or staying until 9:30 p.m. to close the building.

Cars filled the parking lots of the school and the adjacent Milton Leisure Centre and lined Thompson Road.

"The community has really come out in full force and adopted, so to speak, my daughter," Clem Scholtz, Deidre's father, said from his Satok Crescent home Monday night. "To many people, the face of my daughter represents a parent's worst nightmare."

His wife Liz VanCleaf-Scholtz was so overwhelmed she cried, said Jo-Anne Barge, a close family friend and organizer of several fundraising activities for the disease-plagued Holy Rosary senior kindergarten student.

A total of about 2,500 people from near and far turned out for the clinic, which was promoted in local as well as Toronto and Hamilton-area newspaper, radio and television news reports.

"It was a site to behold," said Ms

Barge. "People were standing (in line) so quietly, so patiently."

Some people drove by, but couldn't get into the jammed school. Others weren't permitted to give blood for medical reasons and about 10 who came as the clinic was closing were turned away.

The Scholtz family learned last month that Deidre suffers from aplastic anemia, a rare disease of which there are only 200 to 300 cases a year in Canada.

Because a successful bone marrow transplant is the little girl's only chance for survival, an appropriate bone marrow match must be found.

Deidre, who is in Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, has lost her ability to produce blood, causing vital bone marrow to deteriorate.

She's currently undergoing frequent blood transfusions, but with each one, the chances for a successful bone marrow transplant lessen.

Because each blood sample taken at the clinic costs \$50 to test, the Scholtz' will have to pay more than \$100,000 in an attempt to find a match.

However, businesses and private citizens have already contributed \$48,000 to the Royal Bank's Deidre Scholtz Fund, Ms Barge said, and donations continue to pour in.

Ms Barge said she's confident at least \$100,000 will be raised as the proceeds of planned fundraising activities by countless businesses and community groups are expected this month.

Tough search begins

It will take anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of months to determine if a bone marrow match for Deidre Scholtz has been found.

The five-year-old girl's father, Clem Scholtz, told *The Champion* Wednesday night that he doesn't expect to hear the final results for about two months.

However, word could be heard sooner, according to the Canadian Red Cross Society, if Deidre's case is treated with extreme urgency, a confidential decision that is up to physicians.

Nazeli Seferian, Red Cross bone marrow coordinator, explained that testing of the 2,003 blood samples provided at Sunday's clinic will take two to three weeks.

Then once the initial results are in, the process goes through further stages, she said. The next step is to determine possible matches, of which there could be several.

Further testing is then conducted to see if any of the possible matches are completely compatible.

Normally, testing processes that involve this much blood could take up to four months to complete, Ms Seferian said.

But in extremely urgent situations, the entire process could be finished in a few weeks, she said.

Dr. Jan Boxall, the Scholtz' family physician, said at a press conference March 1 that Deidre needed a bone marrow transplant "in the next couple of months" or she would die.

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