

Volunteers make difference

By BARB JOY

"The only beautiful people are on film. As for the rest of us, we all have some liabilities."

Hon Frank Drea was describing the majority of people in our society who contend with broken marriages, deaths, handicaps of all kinds and "all the things that happen to us" in our lifetimes.

Yet we are more able to deal with them with the help of volunteers in our communities, he said.

The Minister of Community and Social Services told representatives of Halton's social organizations gathered at regional headquarters for Volunteer Recognition Night that

the swing toward community rather than institutionalized care greatly relied for its success on the help of volunteers giving freely of their time and talents.

"Where once we ghettoized everyone over 65 in the notion they'd feel more comfortable with people their own kind, we are now living in a much more realistic way than before," he said, in referring to the current trend of keeping seniors in their homes and in the community as long as possible.

Indeed, he attributed the success of the program he instigated when in correctional services, in which some offenders recompensed victims for

their crimes, to volunteers who brought the two together.

While in jail, such offenders associated with losers but once confronted with winners on the "outside," they often became motivated toward a more successful lifestyle.

"And we've turned the corner on juvenile delinquency," he stated. "Kids of 10 or 11 are now going into mandatory programs."

The 700 or so trained volunteers in juvenile correction centres throughout Ontario have helped turn the tide to the point that now juvenile detention centres in the province are half empty, he added.

"All the significant work with the mentally handicapped has been done by volunteers," said the MPP for Scarborough Centre.

The government came in quite late, and, if not for those interested in them, the mentally disabled would still be in the dark ages.

On the other hand, he thought society and government had an obligation "to do something about" the ex-hospital psychiatric patient, a term he did not condone since it firmly placed a label around such a person's neck that stayed with him the rest of his days.

"The tendency to hospitalize anybody who has any kind of emotional problem has to end," he said.

"Just like anyone else, they need a chance to live in the community, even though its residents might say 'Not on my street.'"

All disadvantaged need a great deal of support and a new program using co-operation between government and churches does just that.

Through congregations of churches of all denominations and through government funding, the homeless and lonely are finding new lives.

Several homes in the Parkdale area of Toronto are being renovated to provide more than a small room and hotplate for wandering residents while daytime activities are available to them in church halls, he said.

That some social needs are well tended while others are not is one aspect of volunteerism he cautioned against. Potential workers may well hesitate entering areas which they see as well-served and in which their contributions are perceived as unnecessary.

He maintained success of social programs who contribute the personal touch, working on a one to one basis, rather than with impersonal and remote governments which, while a prime resource, still rely on the efforts of individuals.

Looking toward the future, Mr Drea contemplated the increasing number of volunteers willing and able to work toward the betterment of life in this province. Those with full-time jobs now would soon be free to contribute their talents and to create a reservoir of assistance to those needing it.

Jaycees at the Mall

Milton Jaycees will be at Milton Mall with a special display to promote the June 3 hike-a-thon to raise funds for the Crawford Lake reconstruction project.

Milton Jaycees spokesman, Roger Trull said "there have been a lot of inquiries about Crawford Lake and the hike itself."

The Jaycees clubs of Halton are sponsoring the hike-a-thon aiming to raise up to \$50,000 to help fund the rebuilding of an Indian longhouse found near the lake following an archaeological dig.

There are three routes for the walk and it is expected as many as

5,000 people may take part

The booth at Milton Mall this weekend will feature the Halton Region Conservation Authority display of work being done at Crawford Lake.

Mr. Trull told The Champion some schools are already in the process of helping raise funds for the project and others are expected to join in soon.

"We are very encouraged by this and hope that when the school children come to sell tickets door-to-door, they will be supported by the community," Mr. Trull said.

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PLAYER OF THE WEEK

MARGO KENT

Margo Kent has been selected as Milton's Player of the Week. Margo has been involved with the Red Cross for over twenty years and is an activity community volunteer, serving on the Board of Directors for The Centre as well as having worked in the past with the girl guides.

Over 150 volunteers, many of them school children, assist Margo with each Red Cross Blood Donor clinic, something she is very pleased about. Margo would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers (some have been with her for over twenty years) and point out that there is a Blood Donor Clinic on May 17th in the Milton Mall between 2 and 8:30 p.m.

Congratulations Margo — Thruway is pleased to name you "Player of the Week".

Each week Thruway Muffler will be saluting a "player of the week", someone who is contributing to the welfare of the community. The recipient will receive a "Milton's Home Team" T-Shirt by dropping into Thruway Muffler.

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