

COMMUNITY

Pals build long-lasting friendship

Summer, much to her delight.

"We can go dress shopping now," said the bubbly 15-year-old, stunned by the fact that she'll be getting an eight-course meal at the lavish affair.

Ana is Figliomeni's first Little Sister and she said she couldn't be happier.

"We've been together since May 2012," she explained. "It's something I always wanted to do since I was young...to help other people. It's just who I am."

Together they've done all kinds of activities and explored many events like plays, family gatherings and cooking, as well as a big fundraiser for the organization held last summer at La Rose Bakery.

This year, they're busy planning another fundraiser that will be held at Champs Family Entertainment Facility.

Ana's guardian agrees the relationship has been extremely beneficial to Ana.

"Big Brothers Big Sisters is an awesome organization," she said. "Mary Anne has been exceptional. I've had other Big Brothers and Big Sisters who were good, but she takes the cake."

She said she can see how beneficial the support for Ana is and has seen a boost in her confidence.

"They've built a really positive relationship

that will last," she said.

To mark the launch of this national 100th anniversary, BBBSC and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health released the first results of one of the largest mentoring studies ever conducted.

The five-year study, which tracked the experiences of some 1,000 children and teenagers registered with Big Brother Big Sisters agencies across Canada, found that those with a mentor are significantly more confident in their academic abilities and considerably less likely to display behavioral problems.

One finding is that girls in the study with a Big Sister were four times less likely to bully, fight, lie or express anger than girls without a mentor.

"This ground-breaking research confirms that mentoring changes the trajectory of young lives," said BBBSC president and CEO Bruce MacDonald. "The findings will have a beneficial impact on our mentoring programs."

Currently, there are 30 Little Brothers and a few Little Sisters waiting for a match in Halton.

Rohde welcomes applications from anyone interested. Visit www.bbbshalton.ca.

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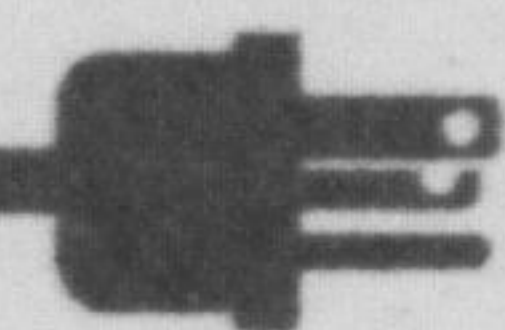


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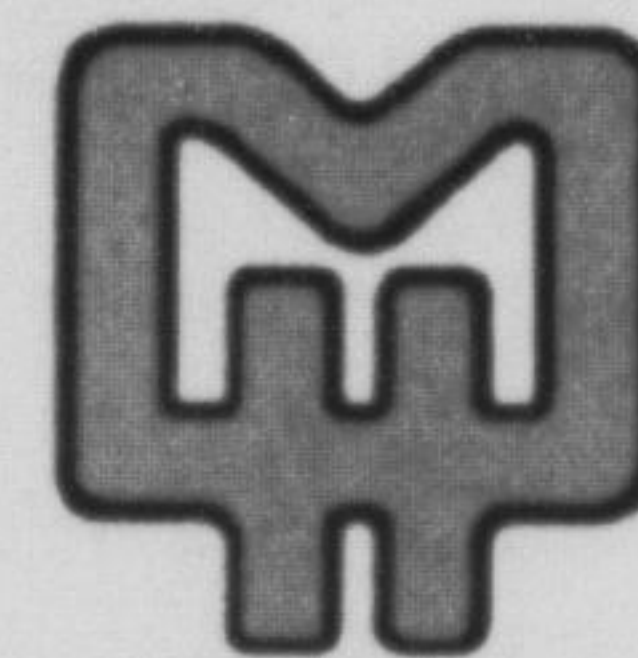
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