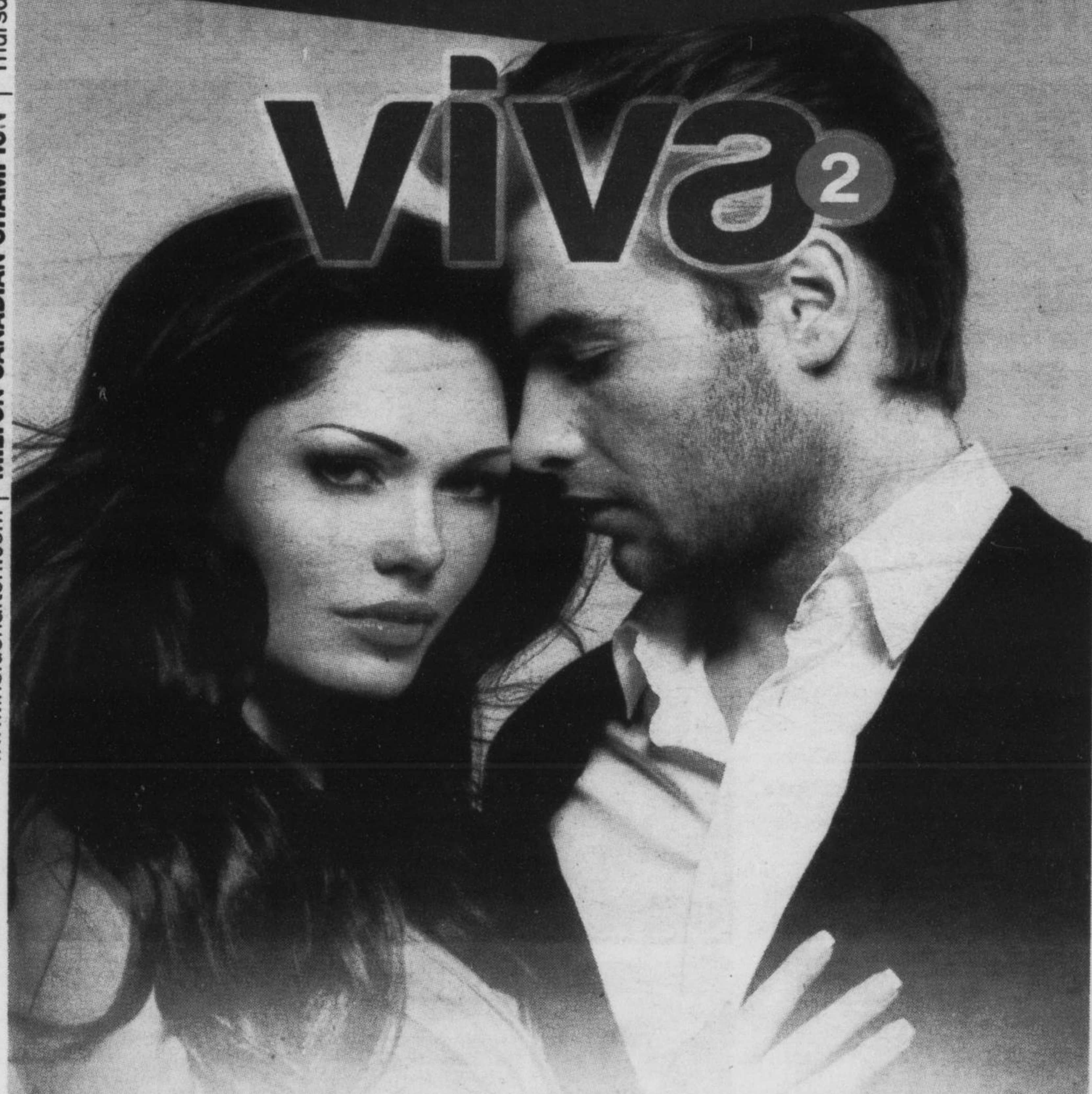


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Week recognizes local entrepreneurs

24 'dragon' and prominent entrepreneur Arlene Dickinson — one of five venture capitalists on CBC's Dragon's Den — is part of Entrepreneur Week (June 2 to 13).

The week recognizes the successes of local entrepreneurs as a community while encouraging others to be innovative in order to drive the local economy.

"I'm really excited to be representing our family in the entrepreneurial spirit. We've been a part of the (Halton) community for 42 years. The fact they chose us makes me really proud," said Longo.

Possessing an entrepreneurial spirit means being enthusiastic, innovative and taking risks in what you do, Longo said.

"In our family, my dad and two uncles — the three founders of Longo's — their vision was not to just build a business to provide opportunities for themselves, but to provide opportunities for those around them," said Longo.

"It was for the team members to keep them with us and to work with our vendor and community partners to make the world a better place."

Longo's has been a family-owned food retailer since 1956 and currently operates 26 stores across the GTA, including two in Oakville as well as in Burlington and Milton.

Longo earned a business degree from Wilfrid

Laurier University in 1993. She began working full time with the company in 1995 and then became the foundation chair after its inception in 1998.

"I worked outside of the family business when I graduated for a little bit. I was actually going to be a chartered accountant, but my real passion was for food," said Longo. "I came back to the family business when the time was right and when there was an opportunity to use the skills I gained."

In 2009, Longo's launched a partnership with Oakville chef and restaurateur Julia Hanna to operate Kids Culinary Community — a not-for-profit organization educating children for free on healthy eating habits and basic cooking skills — at Longo's Lofts.

"The business we're in is constantly changing, it's constantly challenging. It's very competitive. The people I'm around have a passion for food and eating, which is always a big help," said Longo.

The partnership has since grown to include Hanna's other efforts — the Family Culinary Community and Seniors Culinary Community — collectively known as HealthyFam.

Tickets to the Breakfast Seminar Series cost \$90 and can be purchased by calling (905) 632-4444 or by visiting www.microspec.com/tix123/etic.cfm?code=OEW2014.

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