

More facilities added for treatment of emotionally disturbed children

# Year of change at Blue Hills Academy

By Margaret Lade

The past year has been a year of change for Blue Hills Academy for emotionally disturbed children. The academy serves all of York Region.

Since its 1974 annual meeting, Blue Hills has extended its programs from two to four, and has two more in the planning stages. It also has a new executive director.

The first buildings on Bloomington Sideroad West in Aurora, on the north boundary of Richmond Hill, opened in May, 1970 as a treatment centre for children age seven to 12.

Since then a third building has been added and 220 children admitted. Average stay in residence is 18 weeks.

Reporting to Blue Hills' seventh annual meeting June 10, Dr. Douglas Murdoch, president of the board of directors, said the summer day camp program will continue with 50 children involved in each of the two-week sessions.

He referred also to the establishment of a residential treatment centre for adolescents 13 to 18 and to a home care program for disturbed children and their families, both set up last fall.

**Therapeutic nursery**  
Dr. Murdoch who was ending his third term as president, also spoke of the possibility of establishing a therapeutic nursery school for treating children age three, four and five.

A major change was the resignation of Fred Boden as executive director at the end of January. Dr. Murdoch paid tribute to Boden's contribution to Blue Hills and to his successor, Glenn Walterhouse, who had been a senior social worker in family therapy there since 1971.

In conclusion, Dr. Murdoch said, "In our early formative years ... the following statement was made ..."

It should be understood Blue Hills Academy does not pretend to offer a cure-all for the emotionally disturbed youngster. None exists.

What the academy believes is that there is a tremendous need to bring about an understanding between parent and child, child and teacher, child and child, and that this understanding will, in turn, bring about a new start and a healthier relationship between the child and his world.

"To me, the embodiment of this philosophy has always



**John McMurray**  
Elected board president

prevailed here at Blue Hills. I trust it will continue to be so into the future."

**New president**

Elected to succeed Dr. Murdoch as president of the 17-member board was John McMurray of Stouffville, a former trustee with York County Board of Education.

In his report, Dr. Paul Perry, chairman of the professional advisory committee, referred to the development of a nursery school as a "worthwhile addition to the network of Blue Hills Academy services to the children of the community."

Further progress with this project as conceived by staff child care worker David Waite, said Dr. Perry, awaits consideration by the Children's Services Branch of the Department of Health which provides operational financing for Blue Hills.

Blue Hills director Glenn Walterhouse reported further on this proposed program. A survey of professions involved with pre-schoolers in York Region done by Waite has documented the need in this area, he said.

He spoke also of another area where expansion of existing services is being planned.

**In the schools**

"The York County Board of Education has been discussing a classroom for disturbed children in one of its schools, and this is expected to begin in September," said Walterhouse.

"We have been asked to supply a child care worker for this class and plan to involve staff from



**Glenn Walterhouse**  
Executive director

our home care department in working with the students and their families."

**Go into homes**

The home care program initiated in October, Walterhouse reported, makes a child care worker available to spend many hours with a family in its own home, bringing more ap-

propriate and less costly help to children who otherwise might be taken into residence.

Home care has been integrated into the after-care department which follows up on the progress of former residential children.

"We are now serving more children and

families in this program than in the residence and expect this will be the future direction of children's mental health services," Walterhouse said.

**New house open**

October also saw the opening of Summit House in North Richmond Hill to accommodate eight troubled adolescents. It is envisioned as the beginning of long-term, task oriented, rural treatment where adolescents can learn how to develop relationships.

"We have received government approval to expand to 16 beds now and 24 beds in 1976," said Walterhouse, "and (we) hope to acquire a farm in the near future to provide this experience for up to 24 adolescents."

The summer day camp is completely integrated with the residence, he continued, mixing the day campers with the in-patients in groups of five children supervised by a child care worker teamed with a summer student.

**Changed directors**

Perhaps the greatest change at Blue Hills in the past year was the change in top personnel, with the

appointment of Walterhouse following the resignation of the founding executive director, Fred Boden.

"I owe him a debt of gratitude," Walterhouse declared, "not only for what he has taught me, but also for what he has left me — a sound administrative structure, a viable treatment philosophy, and a host of good people and community relationships."

He concluded by thanking the board of directors for their guidance and support, the staff for their dedication and hard work, and the volunteers for their enthusiasm and effort.

Walterhouse expressed special appreciation for the time devoted to the work of Blue Hills by the out-going president, Dr. Murdoch.

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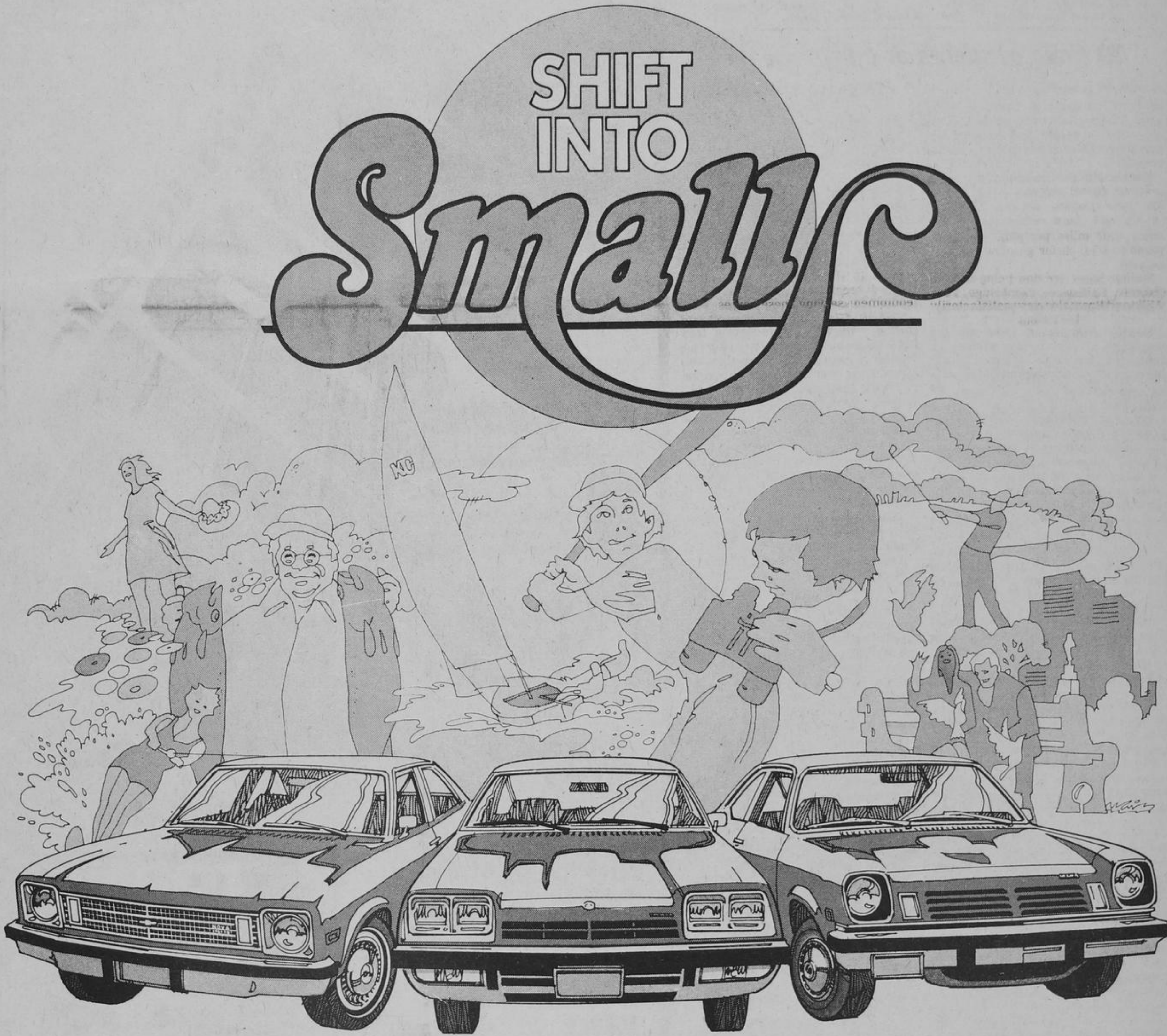
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JULY 10th 7.30 P.M. Richmond Hill Youth Concert Band  
JULY 17th 7.00 P.M. Jack Lander Trio — Jazz \*  
JULY 24th 7.30 P.M. Richmond Hill Youth Concert Band  
JULY 31st 7.00 P.M. — Paul Grosney Dixieland Band \*  
AUGUST 7th 7.30 P.M. Richmond Hill Youth Concert Band  
AUGUST 14th 7.00 P.M. Pat Brady and the Playboys — Country & Western \*  
AUGUST 28th 7.00 P.M. Nicol Brown — Variety \*

\* The music for these occasions is provided by the Parks and Recreation Department with the help of a grant from the Music Performance Trust Funds, obtained with the cooperation of the Toronto Musicians Association.  
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