

8-woman writing team releases book to help parents cope

By DANIEL SCHWAB

WINDSOR — Lisa Raffoul admits her life didn't turn out as planned.

But during a launch Nov. 17 for Special Kids, Special Parents, a resource book for families who have a child with a disability, Raffoul said her life is fuller and richer than she could've imagined.

Her son Eric, 12, has multiple undiagnosed disabilities. He is unable to communicate verbally and is wheelchair-bound and subject to frequent respiratory infections.

"Everyday you wake up not knowing what will happen," Raffoul said. "You don't know what to expect. But he is who he is. I celebrate Eric as the little boy he is, instead of focusing on what's wrong with him."

Last year Raffoul put out a request to various children's services providers looking for parents who might be interested in collaborating on the Special Kids, Special Parents project. Shortly after, Raffoul was joined by seven other moms of children with a disability.

The group started meeting regularly to discuss their challenges and successes.

Over the course of 10 months, the women became a writing team and developed Special Kids, Special Parents.

"We wanted to share our experiences with families to show them they're not alone," Raffoul told an audience attending the book launch at Hiram Walker and Sons Limited.

The group has printed 250 copies of the book have been printed with funding from the Canadian Association of Community Living.

It features seven chapters and explores themes such as "Getting to Know Your Child," "Using Effective Communication" and "Sharing the Load, Getting Support."

One member of the writing team, Chalene Gerbrandt, said developing the book helped serve as a stress-reliever.

"There's a lot of stress having a child with a disability," said Gerbrandt, who's son Andrew has Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. "But there is a lot of joy as well."



Lisa Raffoul signs a copy of Special Kids, Special Parents, a resource book for families who have a child with a disability during a launch Nov. 17. Eight local moms contributed stories of their challenges and successes to the book.

All eight moms agreed that celebrating this joy was also a major part of the book.

"We wanted to talk about maintaining positive relationships," Raffoul said. "You often lash out at those closest to you, expecting they can fix a situation. As time goes on, you realize there may not be a fix so we celebrate what is great about our children."

One of the other authors, Diane Bourbeau, said the book explains that it's important for families to highlight what can be done for a child with a disability — not what can't be done.

"The focus of the book is on parents," Bourbeau said. "The parenting aspect is one of the most important parts

of a child's life. Sometimes our expectations are that there is help out there — but it has to come from the family. It's easy to say you can't do anything because there is no funding."

While each author faced different challenges, they were all able to bond and relate to each other, said Janet Ulicny.

"It was amazing for us to get together and say, 'This is how I got through it,'" she said. "Hopefully in reading our stories other people will be able to relate in some way."

Other authors who contributed to the book are Jennifer Bray, Cheryl Moffat, Heather Shanahan and Priya Sivakumar.

WINTER'S COMING. GET A GRIP TODAY.



WINTER TIRES

Uniroyal® Ice & Snow™ P195/70R14
Installation, balancing, valve stems and lifetime inspection is included in the price of your tires, and our GM expertise. We have tires for all your driving needs.

Installed from
\$89.95⁺
per tire

WE ALSO CARRY THE RIGHT STEEL RIMS FOR YOUR GM VEHICLE

ASK ABOUT THE NEW EXCLUSIVE GM TIRE PROTECTION PLAN

BRAKE MAINTENANCE SERVICE



\$59.95⁺

front or rear disc brakes

- Clean debris & corrosion, lubricate caliper sliders/pins and backing plates, adjust parking brake cable (rear only), road test

TIME TO REPLACE YOUR BRAKES?
ASK ABOUT OUR FULL RANGE OF GM-APPROVED BRAKE PADS TODAY.

BATTERIES & WIPERS



Installed from
\$89.95⁺

• ACDelco 75-60 battery

• ACDelco 22" all-season wipers
• Fits any Cavalier/Sunfire
Installed from
\$14.95⁺

Come In & Receive a ... \$10 Shopping card.
Yours with any \$50 purchase.

Stepping Out

LADIES APPAREL, FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES

This card is valid December 4th to December 24th, 2006 only. Layaways excluded. Minimum \$10 purchase. Limit two cards per transaction.

9 Talbot St., N., Essex, ON 519.776.5000

Bob Price Home Inspection LTD.

NO MONEY DOWN to hold your registration

Register now for your 3 month GUARANTEED SPECIAL RATE!

Fall Sale! **\$283.03** + GST
Any Size House



Please Call: (519) 999-9399 Email: robert770@sympatico.ca

AMHERSTBURG ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 157

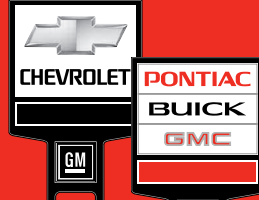
SAT., NOV. 25 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.

ESK FRY EAT IN OR TAKE OUT
Your Choice ALL WELCOME!
Pickerel/Frog Legs - \$9.00/Plate
Lake Erie Yellow Perch \$10.00/Plate
281 DALHOUSIE ST., AMHERSTBURG • 519-736-4485



Goodwrench Service

Right Service. Right Price.



*Plus tax. Tire disposal extra, if required. Steel rims not included. Tire offer includes standard rubber valve stems; additional charges may apply for any other valves. See participating dealers for details. Dealers may set individual prices. Offer for retail customers only. Offers not available in Thunder Bay, Fort Frances, Dryden, Terrace Bay and Kenora. 1-800-GM-DRIVE or goodwrench.ca

goodwrench.ca