



**CAR TROUBLE –**  
A police officer wraps emergency tape around a car that spun out of control and into a ditch on County Road 34 just northwest of Essex Monday morning as the driver and passenger look on. A snow-storm blew through Essex during the morning rush hour, making the roads slippery for commuters.

**Essex and Community Historical Research Society**

**GENERAL PUBLIC MEETING**  
**Thursday, March 29, 2007**

**Essex Community Centre, Community Room**  
**25 Gosfield Townline W.**  
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**Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.**  
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## Gymnastics help kids with disabilities

By DANIEL SCHWAB

A not-for-profit group dedicated to helping people with disabilities is looking to raise funds for a gymnastics program.

Windsor Vistas Gymnastics houses the not-for-profit group Special Friends of Gymnastics, and staff want to get the word out that "members of the community with special needs have a place to come for gymnastics," said Sheri Fielder, assistant to the corporate manager.

Fielder said the group is setting up a fund with the hopes of raising money through sponsors and fundraisers to help supplement the cost of transportation and gym fees for participants with disabilities.

"They have enough barriers," Fielder said, adding that many people with disabilities don't have enough physical education in their lives.

Melinda Outram opened the gym last year with her

brother Michael. She currently offers classes twice a week for people living with disabilities.

Members of the class have disabilities such as autism, Down Syndrome and Prader Willie Syndrome, she said.

For a \$72 fee and a \$30 registration charge for Gymnastics Ontario, members can join the classes for eight weeks.

The exercise activities include using balance beams, bars, trampolines and vaulting.

"For the kids, it works their core stability," Outram said, adding that working together in a group of peers also makes it easier and more fun for the participants.

Classes are available for all ages and include those as young as 18 months.

Currently, the 280 members of the recreational gymnastics group are selling chocolates to add to the fund. It's the third fundraiser the group has spearheaded. The first was a Gymnathon in

October when members collected pledges. It was followed by a second fundraiser in December that had members selling items from a gift catalogue.

Along with supplementing transportation fees and registration costs for members with disabilities, the group is also trying to make their facility barrier-free with more ramps and access to the gym.

Outram has been helping youngsters become physically fit for 20 years.

She also works regularly at the gym with grade school students who have disabilities.

"I teach kids routines and then they go to their schools and do demonstrations in front of the whole school," she said proudly.

Outram is hoping to have another fundraiser, a trampoline competition, near the end of the year.

The gym is located at 2996 Deziel Drive in Windsor.

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