

New moms can get help with babies

By PAULA CROWELL
Staff Reporter

New mothers, you're not alone. This is the premise of Baby Basics, a non-profit support service starting in Markham.

For many women the birth of their first child is a time of mixed emotion.

Expectant mothers are usually so pre-occupied with the birth itself they think little of what comes after when they're sent home from the hospital with a tiny human whose life depends on them.

Two Markham women are establishing a course locally to help women overcome the lack of confidence and feelings of isolation and loneliness which often accompany the birth of a child.

Baby Basics is a program which began six years ago in Toronto. It was founded by two public health nurses with children of their own. They saw a need for instruction and guidance after the baby is born.

Cathy Kohm and her partner Sandra Comisarow decided it was about time someone provided help to new mothers. Many of their questions can't even be imagined before the birth takes place.

Mrs. Kohm said, "They're concerned about breast and bottle feeding, 'is the baby getting enough,' and 'am I going to spoil her by picking her up all the time?'"

But the mother of three is encouraged by the fact that the problems have remained the same through the years.

She said the hardest part is getting the women motivated to leave the house with their baby so soon after birth.

Mothers are encouraged to begin the program when the baby is about two weeks old. Mrs. Kohm explained that the hassles of dressing a baby and getting ready to leave the house can seem insurmountable to a new mother.

"But once they get out they really enjoy it," she said.

Baby Basics begins with one prenatal class during the last month of pregnancy which prepares moms for the hospital stay and caring for their newborns until they return home.

A home visit is arranged once mom and baby are settled. The course organizers stress it's not a social visit, so there's no need for new mothers to tidy up if they're feeling weary.

Program literature describes the visit as a chance for the nurse-

instructor to examine the baby and supervise a feeding.

Classes are held once each week and are kept to 1½ hours. Topics of discussion include breast and bottle feeding, crying, establishing routines, growth and development, creative play, the sick child, nutrition and safety.

But baby isn't the only focus of the group. Psychological and physical affects on new mothers are equally important.

A nutritious snack will be provided at each meeting.

Cathy Rogers and Judy Cameron are the counsellors who will lead Baby Basics in Markham.

Mrs. Rogers is a registered nurse who was head nurse of the obstetrics department at Toronto General Hospital where she still works on a part-time basis teaching pre-natal classes.

"Pre-natal only takes you to a point and then you're left in the lurch," she said, adding that any attempt to talk about post-partum (after birth) adjustments during pre-natal classes seems too far off in the minds of parents.

"They're so geared up to deliver they don't hear you."

Mrs. Cameron has taught the course in Toronto and started the program in Scarborough. She discovered there was a need for a course in Markham when local women registered in her course in Scarborough.

"They said the only way to meet new mothers was in the park," she said commenting on the lack of social resources for new mothers here.



Judy Cameron (left) and Cathy Rogers are conducting Baby Basics a support and information group for new mothers in Markham. The program runs once a week for eight weeks and is designed to help

new mothers realize that they're not alone. Both instructors are registered nurses with children.

— Paula Crowell

The registered nurse brings a wealth of experience to the course.

Mrs. Cameron has worked as a visiting nurse for the Victorian Order of Nurses and for St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto as

well as caring for her seven children.

To register for the course call Cathy Kohm 783-9680. Baby Basics is a non-profit operation, but fees are charged to cover the

expenses of the instructors. Registration is \$75 and \$15 for the home visit.

The program is ready to begin as soon as a group is established. Classes are limited to eight participants.

Markham NDP meets

The first General Meeting of the Markham NDP Riding Association will take place at 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday October 15th, 1986 in the Board Room of the Old Markham Arena (Highway 7 and Highway 48).

The new provincial Riding of Markham was officially created on July 10, 1986. The boundaries of the new riding coincide with the boundaries of the Town of Markham, en-

compassing the villages of Markham, Unionville and that part of Thornhill lying east of Yonge Street. The rest of Thornhill, Richmond Hill, and Oak Ridges are part of the redefined Riding of York Centre.

At this inaugural meeting of the Markham NDP, there will be an election of Executive Officers and

plans will be discussed for fundraising. The meeting will be chaired by Unionville resident Christopher Olsen, NDP candidate for the Riding of York Centre in 1977.

All NDP supporters and those interested in learning more about the New Democratic Party of Ontario are urged to attend. For further information contact Marg Searle 294-1817.

Markham Fair



COUNT DOWN

A.T.V. Pull 7.30 p.m. Wed.
Demolition Derby 8 p.m. Wed.
B.M.X. Freestyle Show: Thurs., Fri., Sat., 11 a.m., 2 p.m. & 6:45 p.m.

Teen Day Fri. with Special Prizes
Teen Talent Contest 3 p.m. Pre-register 294-3179

Country & Western show with the Diamond Reo Band, featuring the Leahy Family. Fri., 8 p.m.
Good Bros. 3 shows Fri. & Sat., 8 p.m. & Sat., 2:30 p.m.
Homcraft demonstrations include quilting, rug hooking, Christmas crafts, cooking, cake decorating with free samples, weaving and smocking.
Fashion show Sat., 12 p.m., Sun., 12:30 p.m. — casual wear

Horse pull Sat., 7 p.m. Heavy horses beautifully harnessed, pull weights. Their co-operation and power are dramatic.
Horse races Sat., 1:30 p.m. Standard Bred racing with pari-mutuel betting. 7:30 p.m. Quarter horse racing also with Pari-mutuel betting. Markham is the only night quarter horse racing in Canada.
Tractor pull Fri., 7 p.m.
Fiddle Contest Sat., 7 p.m. For info call Laura Heighway 475-1870

Old Macdonald's barn with mother animals and their babies, many of which you can touch. Shearing, milking and shoeing demonstrations make it more interesting.

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