CHRISTINA BELL

Campaign benefits children

By KATE GILDERDALE

The Lions-sponsored Easter Seal Campaign is well underway in Whitchurch-Stouffville. It concludes March 31.

Six thousand requests for donations have been sent out by mail to Stouffville residents. The goal for 1989 is \$5,000. A total of \$4,500 was received during the 1988 campaign. The Easter Seal Society offers a comprehensive range of services for physically handicapped children throughout the province.

The Society own and operates five summer camps, offering activities like arts, drama, swimming and outdoor adventure programs. It offers financial assistance towards the cost of braces, wheelchairs and other equipments required by the physically handicapped child.

There are district nursing offices across Ontario, where Easter Seal nurses provide parents with advice and help in caring for their children at home and in the communituy. Fund raising also goes towards ongoing medical research into crippling disorders in children, preventative measures and new treatment techniques.

Annual diagnostic clinics are sponsored by the Society, with about 1,000 youngsters examined each year, and funds are provided for the 19 treatment centres in Ontario. The Easter Seal Communications Institute is constantlyaworking on programs which will enable children with speech problems to communicate with others.

There are ten local youngsters who benefit from this vital program. One of them is Christina Bell. Christina suffers from cerebral palsy left hemiplegia, a condition that affects her left hand and leg, and also interferes with her ability to speak. She'll be seven in March.

When diagnosed at the age of a year, her mother Lori enrolled her in an infant stimulation program, that lasted until Christina was five years old. One of the people there advised Lori to contact the Easter Seal Society. The help they've provided her and Christina has made a big difference to both their lives, she stresses.

'If I had any questions of where to go for help, or if I needed something, I would call them," notes Lori. "They'll supply me with a name or who to call for services."

At first, she was unaware she could receive financial assistance. "Christina needed special shoes I was put in touch with Paul Roney at the Lions Club and they provided funding". This year, she's hoping to enter

Christina in the Easter Seal summer camp at Blue Mountain. It would be a good experience for her to see there are other han-

dicapped children and they can have a good time." With the help of a staff member at the Society, Lori has filled out an application. When Christina needed a brace for her left leg, she was told the government would pay 75% of the

cost. Such equipment is expensive, but thanks to the generosity of the local Lions Club, Lori didn't have to worry. They picked up the other 25% for me," she explains.

One of the problems of having a handicapped child in this area, she says, is that you have to travel to the city for special programs like swimming.

"Everything she does, she does with normal kids." Last year she took T-ball, but couldn't continue because she needed an operation. While Christina was in hospital in Richmond Hill, the Society covered all Lori's transportation costs and found someone to drive her to and from the hospital. Christina is in a special Grade I class, at Orchard Park, Public School, joining the regular class for social sciences and gym. She also receives speech therapy at

school. school, although communicating take the time to listen to what she's saying," observes Lori.

