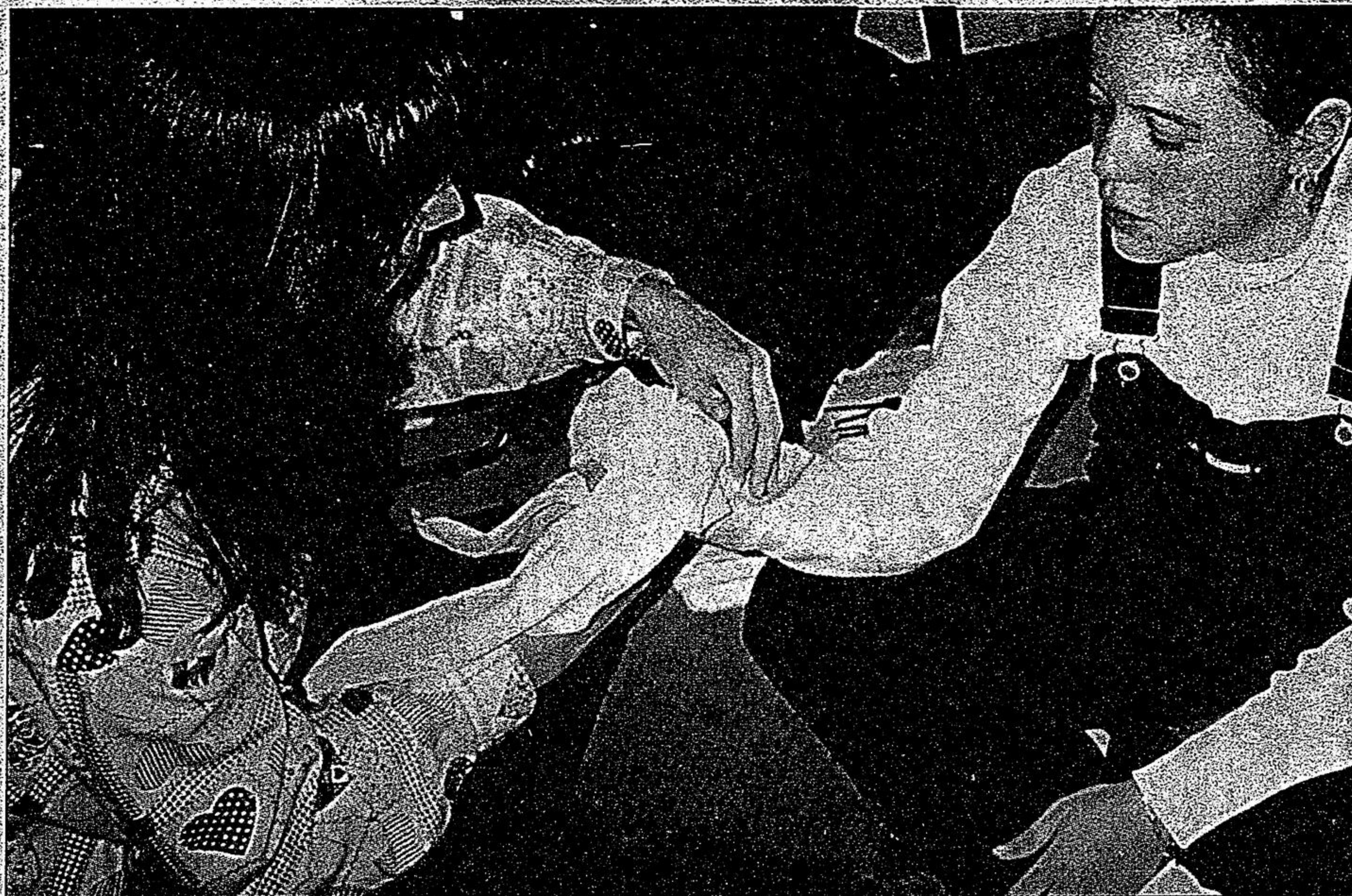


# LIVING



Audrey Brumell, training officer for the York Central division of St. John Ambulance, shows volunteer Tara Dwyer how to bandage an arm.

## Always ready to serve

*You can count on St. John Ambulance volunteers to be on the lookout at community events*

BY HEIDI RIEDNER  
CORRESPONDENT

**I**f you are injured or ill, you can bet your life, the St. John Ambulance brigade knows how to help.

"We're the first link of assistance at public events providing initial emergency treatment," said Rob Dutton, a 35-year-old software developer and volunteer member of the York Region branch of St. John Ambulance.

"And depending on the severity of the injury, we are able to make informed decisions about treatment and when to call for assistance as required."

When Dutton moved to Newmarket two years ago and found out about the local brigade, he decided it would be a good way to brush up on his first-aid skills while doing something worthwhile for his

community.

Dutton, now the division superintendent, explained the volunteer brigade's main job is to provide first aid at various local events such as fairs, concerts and tournaments.

The brigade was on hand at the Markham Fair this year and will provide coverage for the upcoming Remembrance Day parade in Richmond Hill.

**'It's amazing how much time you can make for something that you love.'**

Members are required to pass a standard first-aid course, a Level C CPR course, and attend weekly meetings involving training and practical experience exercises.

"A significant number of us have advanced first aid and I'd like to believe we can handle anything within the limits of our training," said Dutton.

Richmond Hill's Tara Dwyer, the 23-year-old York Central division superintendent, agrees.

"When I first joined, I wondered what I was going to find. But being part of the brigade is provided me the opportunity to meet some great people, have fun and do something worthwhile."

Dwyer explained that members come from many different backgrounds, from those interested in pursuing a career in emergency services to those interested in a rewarding way to spend their free time.

And while the thought of dealing with everything from nose bleeds to heart attacks may be daunting to some, Dwyer said a person's comfort level is always taken into consideration.

"It can be quite intimidating, but no one who is uncomfortable or uneasy about what they are doing is put on a duty alone. Support is an important aspect of what we do, in addition to the testing and evaluating."

In addition to her brigade duties, Dwyer is also an instructor and evaluator, juggling her full-time job with her volunteer efforts.

"It's amazing how much time you can make for something that you love."

St. John Ambulance provides courses, training and coverage for both adults and children out of centres in Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Markham and Unionville.

A first aid kit and uniform are provided for a minimum one-year commitment to perform 60 hours of service per year.

Contact Dutton at 1-800-268-1677, ext. 52, or Dwyer at ext. 45.



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