

**HEALTH: Survivors of hepatitis B, C have larger support group**  
**Group shares experiences on living with hepatitis**

BY JENNIFER BROWN  
 STAFF WRITER

Survivors of hepatitis B and C living in York Region now have access to a larger support network as the local group has joined forces with a national organization.

Last spring, a small group of people formed the Hepatitis Society of York Region and, as the membership grew to about 100, there was increasing demand for education services and conferences on living with the disease.

"Originally, we didn't want to be part of the national group because they only seemed to be involved with the compensation side and we were only interested in the support side," said Joe Rinella, a Richmond Hill resident who was diagnosed with hepatitis C two years ago.

Rinella helped form the York Region

Hepatitis B/C Association to allow individuals to obtain and share current information about the diseases, their treatment and how to live a productive life.

Support groups were hard to find when Rinella was first diagnosed. People with hepatitis C could find help in Simcoe County and in Toronto, but until now, there wasn't a group in York Region. Working with the health department, Rinella helped create the support group, which now draws people from as far as Barrie and Keswick.

The group plans to feature speakers and information meetings. The next meeting will be held Feb. 17 at the York Region health services office in Unionville, located at 4261 Hwy. 7 E. (Shops of Unionville) suite 202/203. For more information, call Mary at 1-800-461-2135.

**Win friendship quilt; help stroke victims**

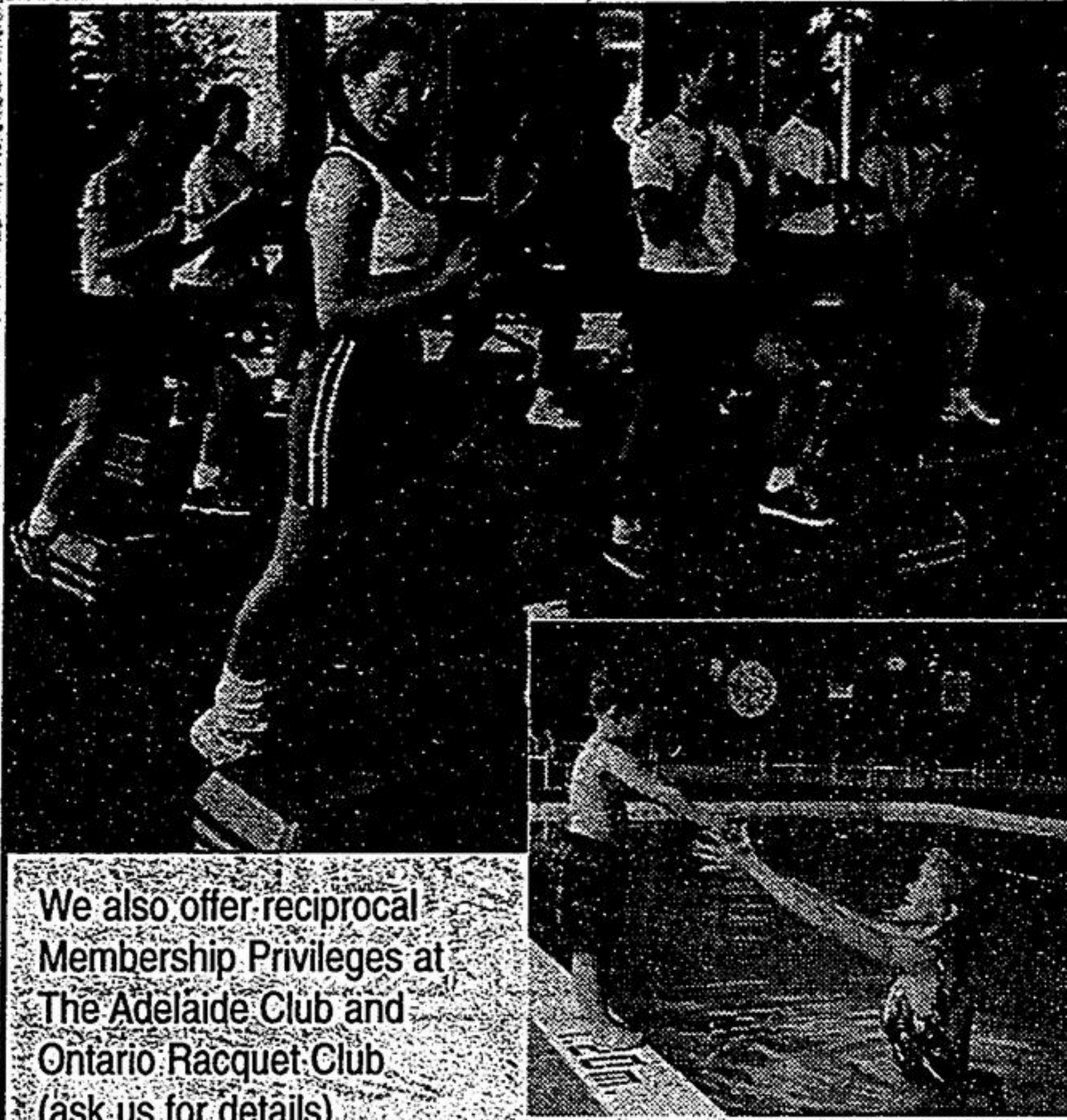
Some lucky person, for \$2, will win a prize sampler friendship quilt being raffled off March 11 at the York-Durham Aphasia Centre, 12184 Ninth Line, Stouffville.

There is a history label attached indicating it was donated to the Aphasia Centre by Heather Ingram on behalf of the York Heritage Quilters Guild.

While the guild supplied the challenge fabric, Ingram donated the sash-

ing fabric, pieced and backed the quilt, created the history label and enlisted Marie Kidd of Lisle, Ontario, to do the overall quilting.

Tickets may be purchased through the York-Durham Aphasia Centre at 642-2053 or Russell Weeks at 294-2735. The York-Durham Aphasia Centre provides a variety of services to adults with communication disorders such as aphasia commonly occurring after stroke or head injury.

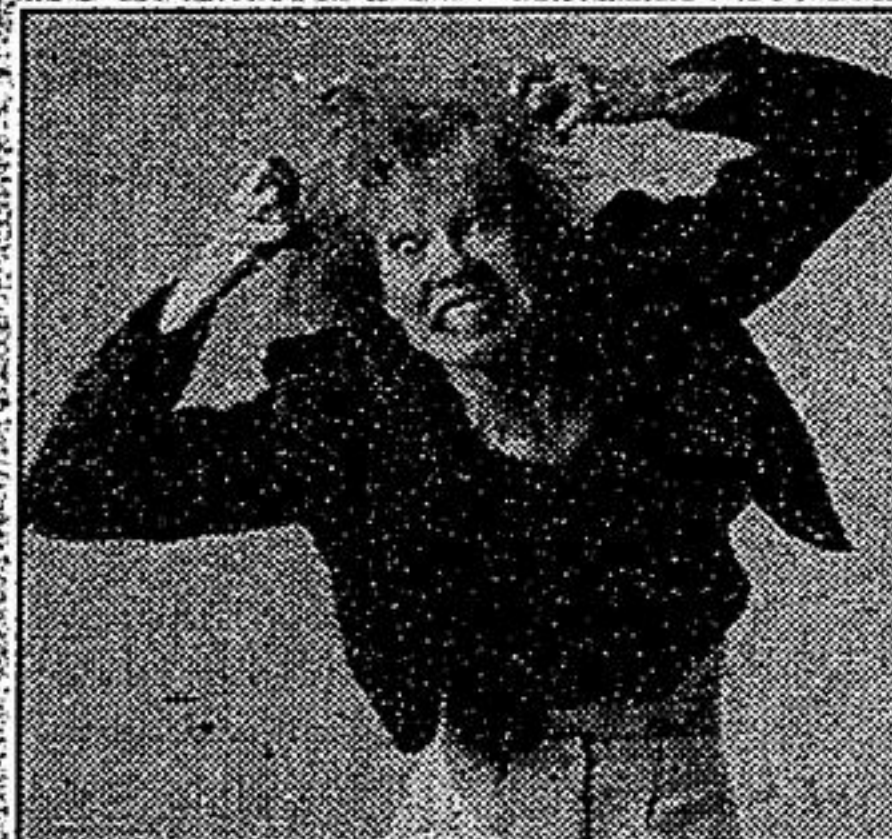


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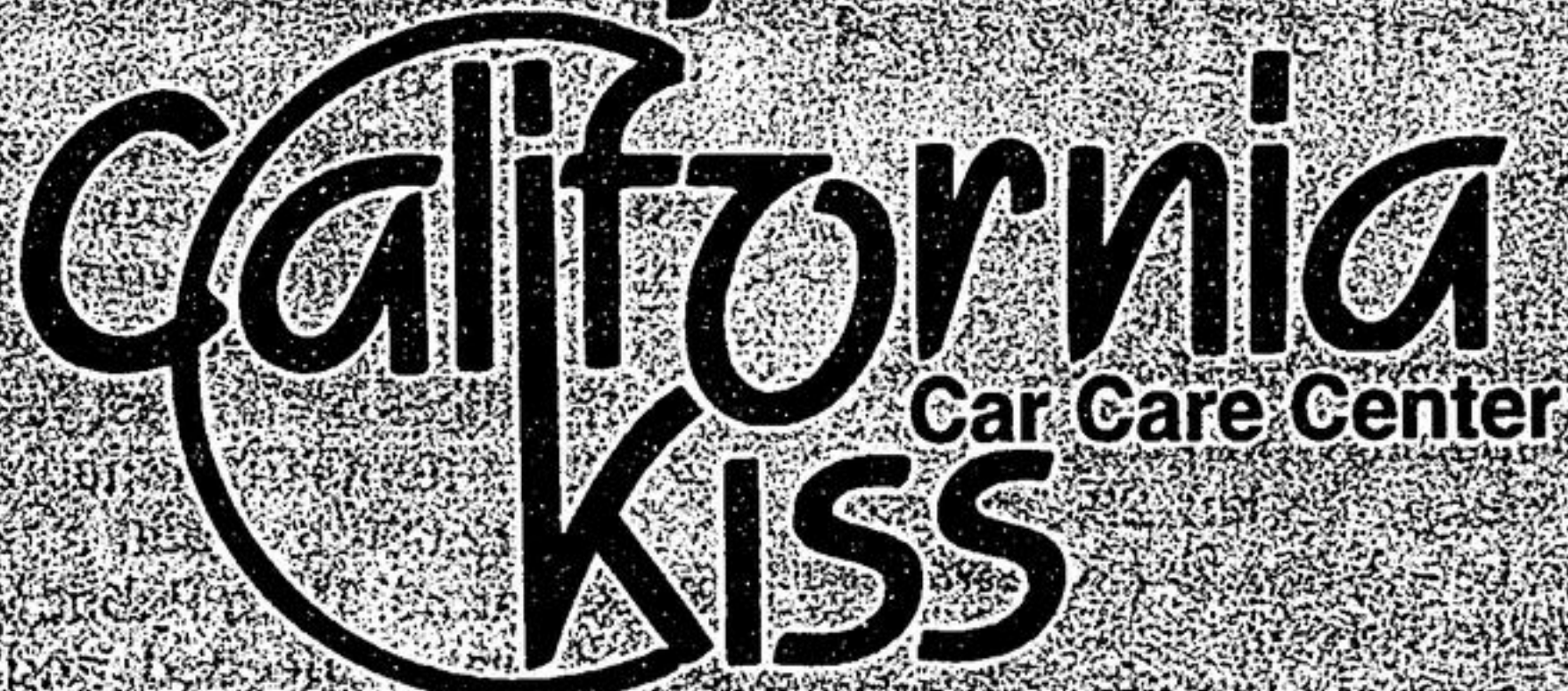
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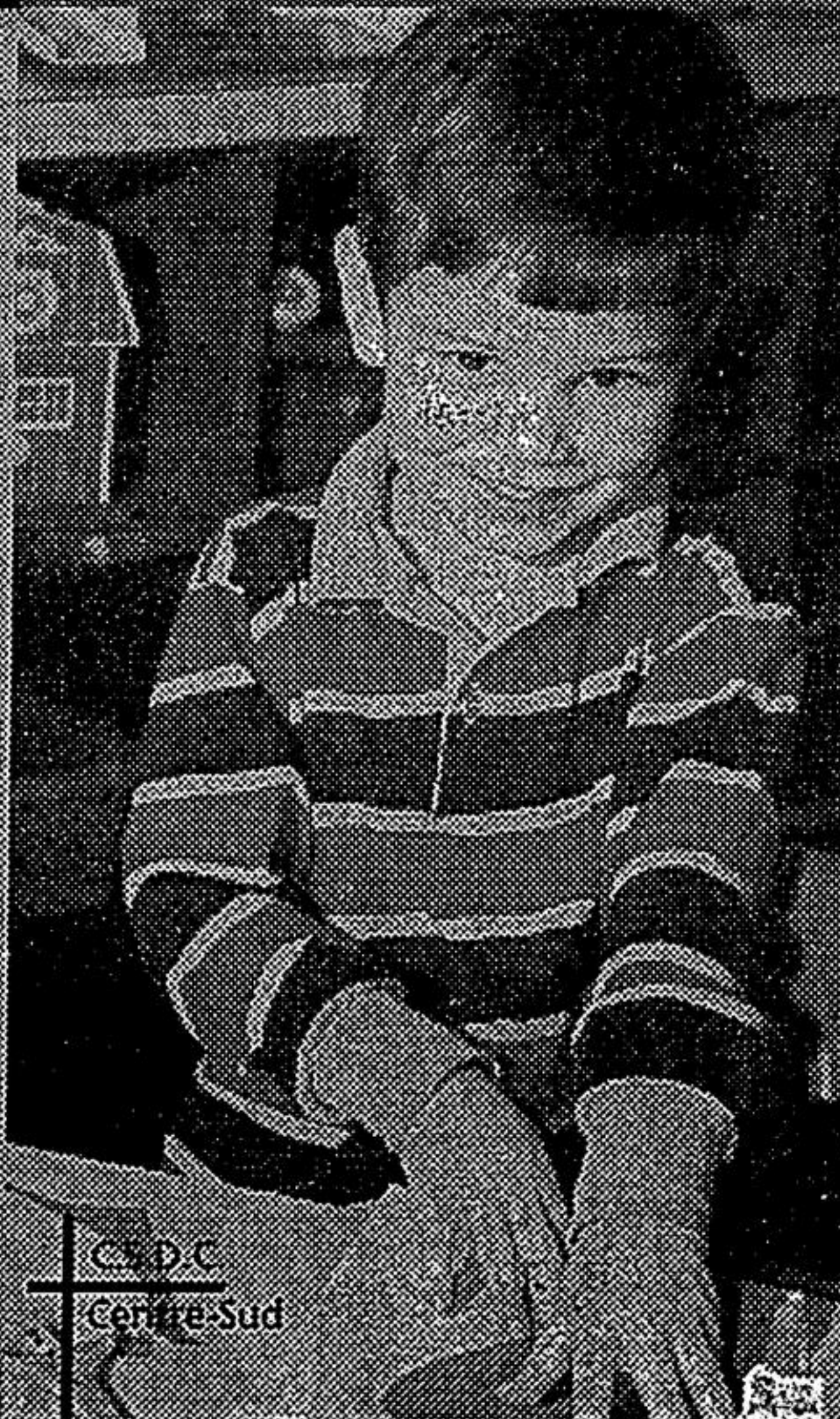
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