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Doctor on mission to stamp out blindness

Blind mission director at work in S. America

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
 Staff Writer

The ravages of blindness that rob children of education and adults of the chance to work compelled Dr. Rainald Duerksen of Paraguay to take action.

The ophthalmologist opened a clinic 13 years ago in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay, and began treating the destitute blind along with his private practice patients.

The need for eye surgery and care is so great among South America's poor that he is opening a new hospital to replace the two tiny buildings that now house Programa Vision.

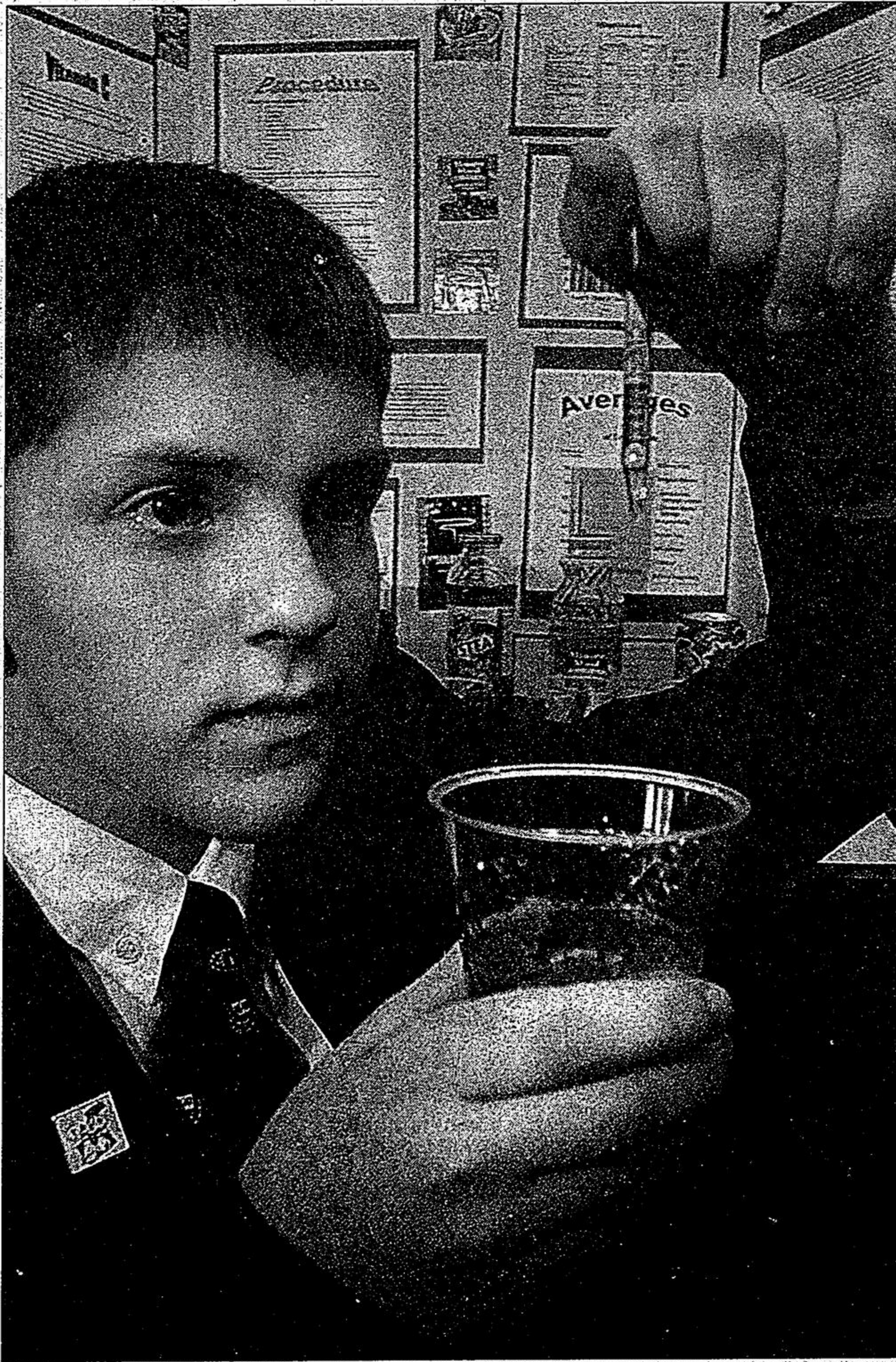
Dr. Duerksen performed 2,100 cataract operations last year and aims to restore sight to 12,000 people each year.

He was at Christian Blind Mission International headquarters in Whitchurch-Stouffville Thursday to give first-hand accounts of the problems faced by the blind and raise funds for a new hospital he is building in Asuncion, Paraguay's capital, that will serve people throughout South America. The visit to CBMI was the 36th stop Dr. Duerksen made on a two-week trip across Canada.

He is CBMI's Programa Vision director in South America. The program is part of Vision 2020, a coalition of agencies including CBMI that has

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Getting the goods on drinks



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Stouffville's Alexander Gillespie, a student at Pickering College in Newmarket, drops juice into a cup during the York Region Science and Technology Fair at Seneca@York University last Saturday. He was dramatizing his conclusion that cranberry juice has the highest concentration of vitamin C of popular non-soft drinks he tested. He subjected 50 people to the test.

More teachers for York in deal

Region one of few growing boards in Ontario

BY CAROLINE GRECH
 Staff Writer

The York Region board should easily reach a deal with its teachers in June after an unprecedented pact with the province, chairperson Bill Crothers predicts.

"I have no doubts about that. The negotiations in our board have been cordial," Mr. Crothers said, after an agreement between the province and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario was reached late last week.

The agreement addresses the key issues of preparation time and salaries by phasing an increase to 200 minutes a week of preparation time over four years and providing wage increases of 2 per cent in the first two years with a 2.5 to 3-per-cent increase in the third and fourth years.

The teachers union has suspended its work-to-rule campaign until June 1.

The agreement throws the battle back into the local arena, with issues such as benefits and transfer clauses being the major remaining issues in the York Region talks.

"We're optimistic that this (deal) could be done, if boards are willing, by the end of May," Emily Noble, president of the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario said.

The agreement also means more teachers for York Region as one of only a few boards in

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