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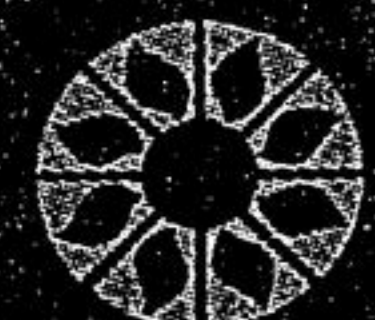

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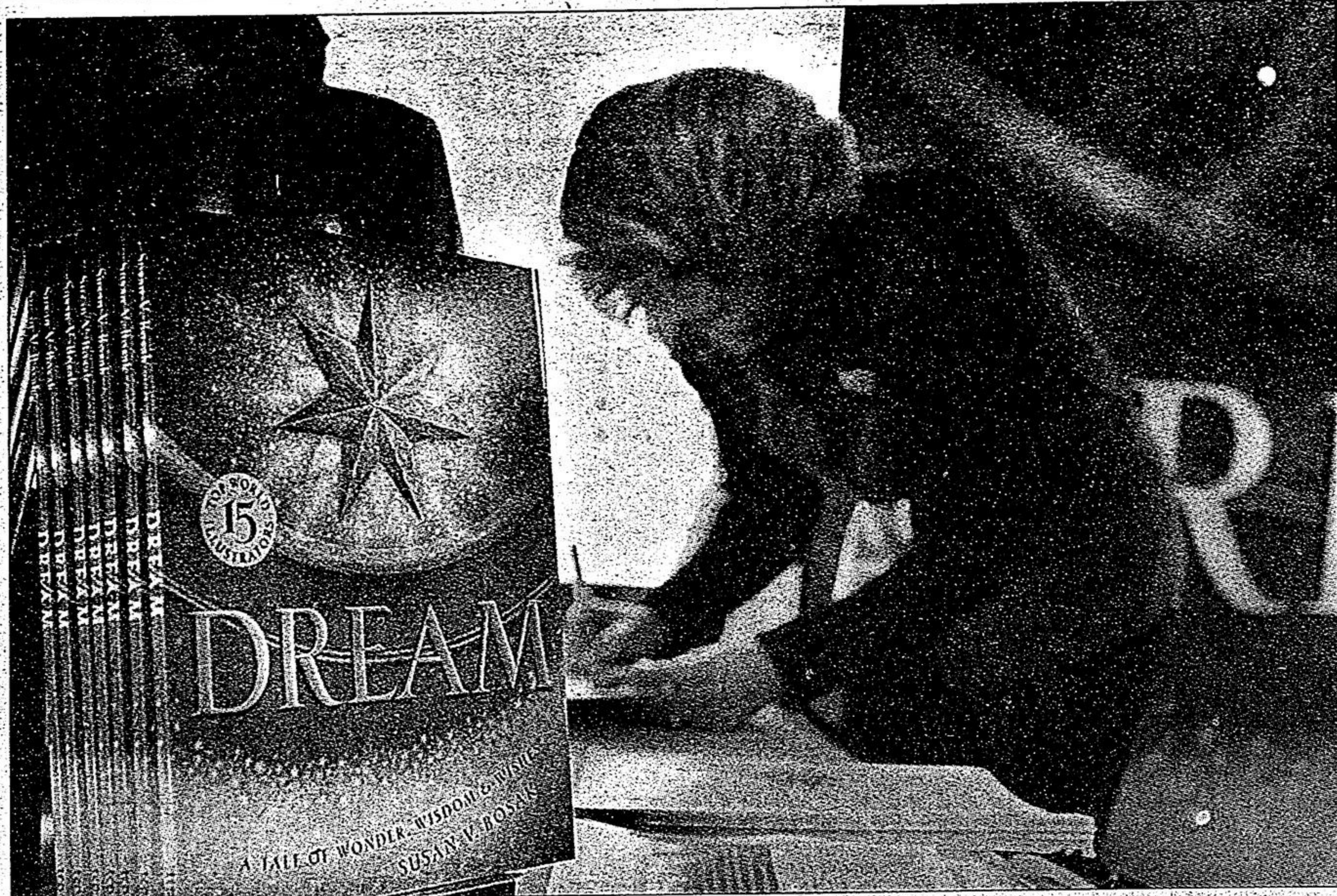
Iran has formerly worked
 at the Embassy Suites and
 on Main St. Unionville.
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PHOTO/SIMONE GERVAIS

Susan V. Bosak, author of *Dream*, a book on character development, signs autographs at the Character Matters conference. She is donating 20 per cent of the proceeds of her book to a program to prevent bullying in schools.

Speaker urges more help for poor nations

York character conference focuses on compassion

BY ROY GREEN
 Staff Writer

It took three years to raise \$6 billion for the battle against HIV/AIDS, but only two weeks to collect \$10 billion for victims of the Boxing Day tsunami in southeast Asia, according to the executive director of Doctors Without Borders.

The response to the devastating natural disaster was a massive outpouring of generosity by people of character around the world, David Morley told a packed seminar at the York Region Char-

acter Community conference in Richmond Hill Friday.

"Only a week after the event, we had met our fundraising target, but people insisted on contributing," Mr. Morley said. "It's amazing how many people told us they viewed the world in a different way now."

Mr. Morley was part of a panel discussion — Character into Action; Southeast Asia to Ontario — which included David Agnew, president and CEO of UNICEF Canada, Linda Tripp of World Vision and Emma Rooney and a youth program co-ordinator with Canadian-based Street Kids International.

The scope of the disaster transcended Canadians'

usual caution about giving out financial information, said Mr. Agnew.

"There was a huge jump in online donations after the tsunami," he said.

"A year ago, people were afraid to use credit cards on the Internet but they realized there was an urgency in this situation."

Another major motivator, according to Ms. Tripp, was the timing of the tragedy.

"It was Christmas and the mood was centred on family, generosity and sharing," she said.

"Then we were jolted by the images on TV. Here, we were indulging in turkey and gifts while these people were losing everything. How could there be anything but a great outpouring of compassion?"

The challenge for people of character now, Mr. Morley said, is to urge the federal government to meet its commitments to less fortunate

'It's amazing how many people told us they viewed the world in a different way now.'

David Morley
 Doctors Without Borders

nations.
 "It was a Canadian, Lester B. Pearson, who said nations could eradicate poverty by donating only 0.7 per cent of their wealth to international aid," he said.

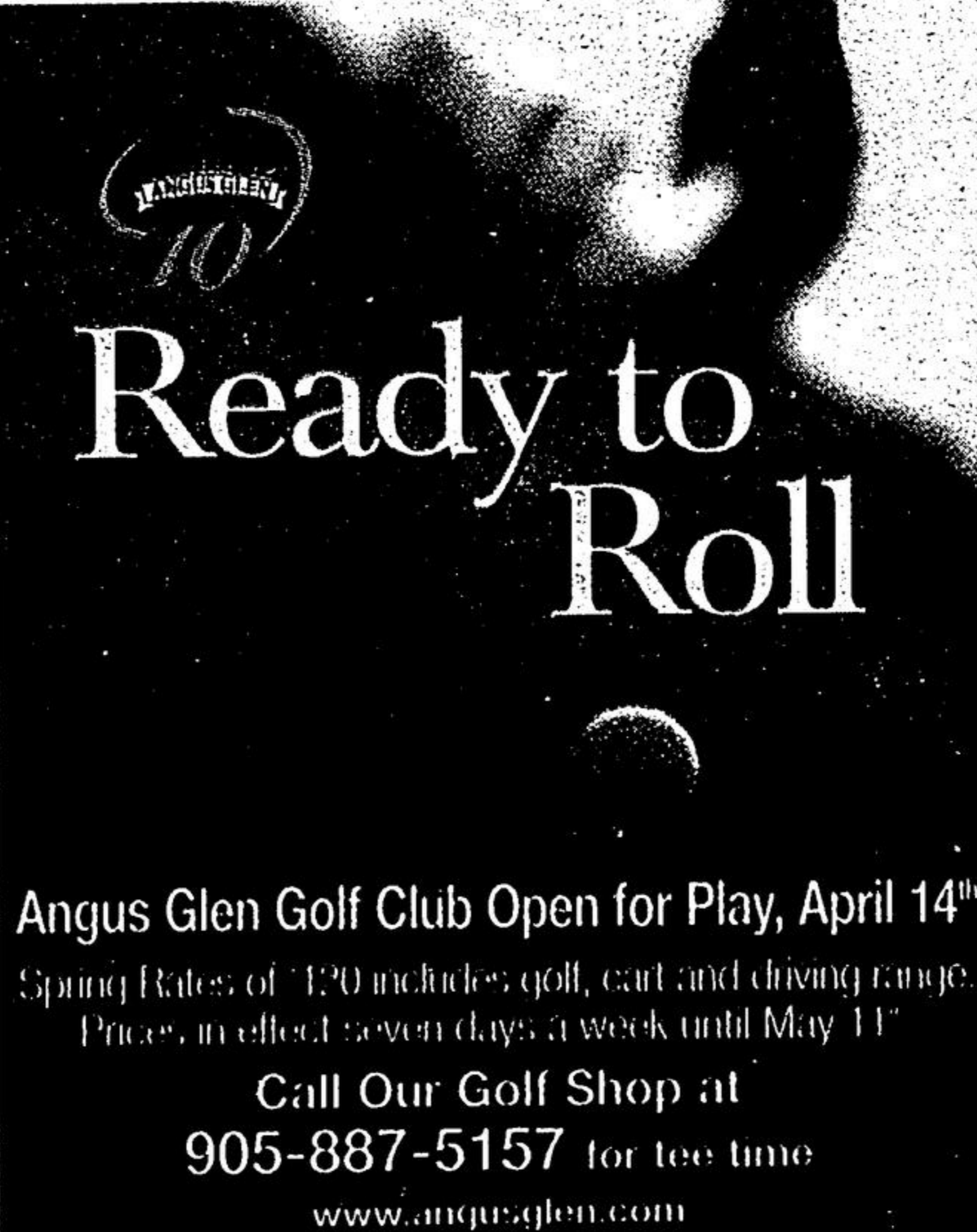
"I'm ashamed that we've never met the bar that he raised."

More than 300 people, including educators and business people, attended workshops and seminars to learn practical applications for building and implementing character communities into schools, homes, businesses and families.

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Call 905-640-4440 to reservations.