

Campaign to rebuild therapy pool

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

Jesse Scime wants to get back into the water.

More accurately, the five-year old quadriplegic tot born with cerebral palsy needs to resume the weekly therapy he received since age two at Southlake Regional Health Centre's therapeutic pool, which closed last summer.

The pool, the only hospital-based facility of its kind in York, and the specially trained physiotherapists and volunteers relieved Jesse's uncontrolled muscle spasms, his mother, Sally, said.

"The warm water relaxes his muscles so that the therapists can help him stretch his arms and legs to release the spasms," she said. "When he comes out of the pool, he is completely relaxed and able to move more easily with less pain. The benefits of the treatment last for some time."

The 30-year old pool's mechanical equipment, patient chair lift and change facilities require replacement and renovation.

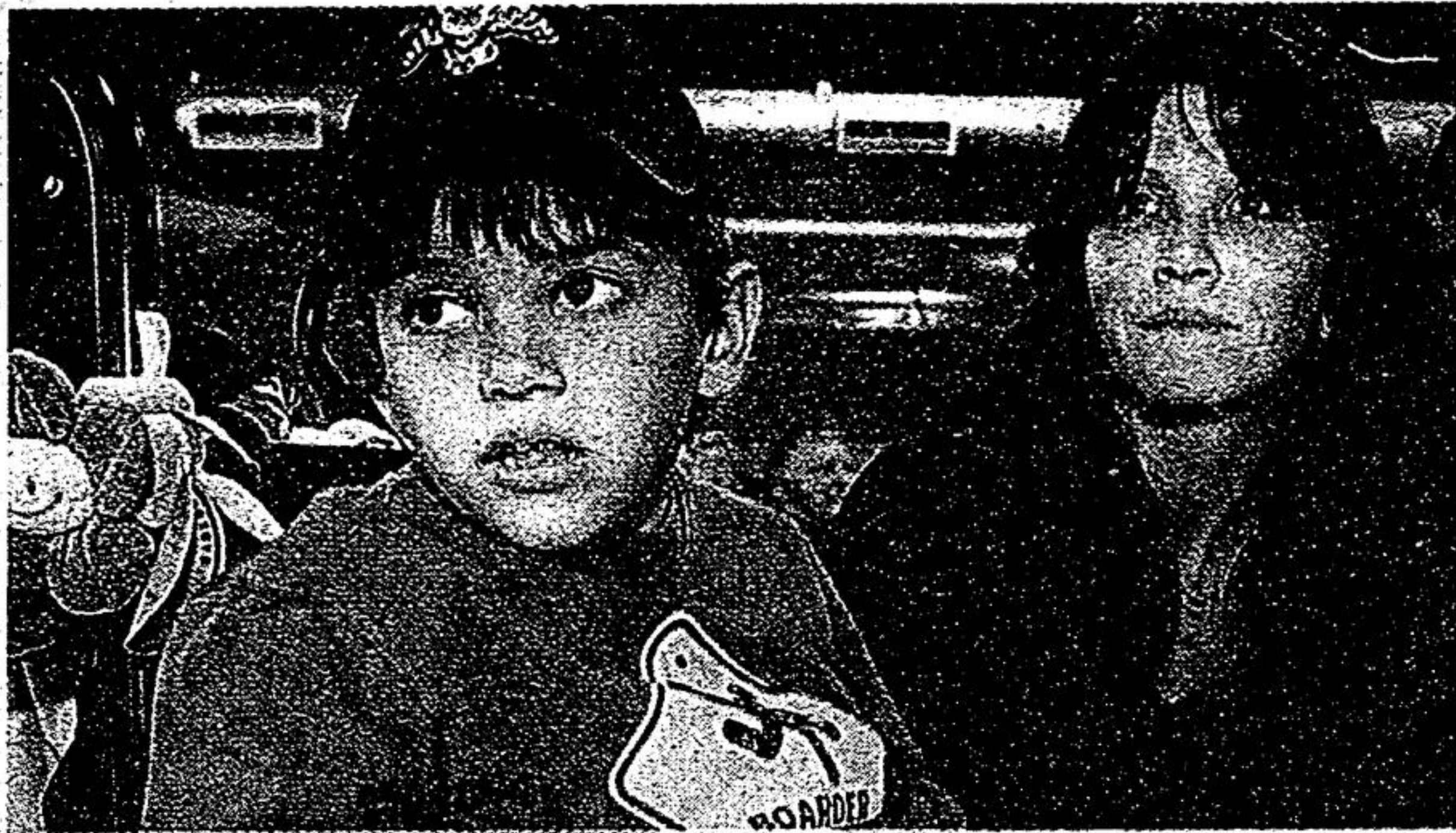
Since July, Jesse's only alternative has been a swimming class at a local pool.

"The teacher is not a rehab therapist and the water is not as warm, so Jesse is not enjoying the same benefits," Ms Scime said. "They're teaching him how to swim, not how to battle what he really has."

To ensure Jesse and the other 26,000 patients per year who received therapy can resume treatments, Southlake has launched a fundraising campaign to rebuild and improve the facility originally donated through the Whipper Watson Foundation in the mid 1970s.

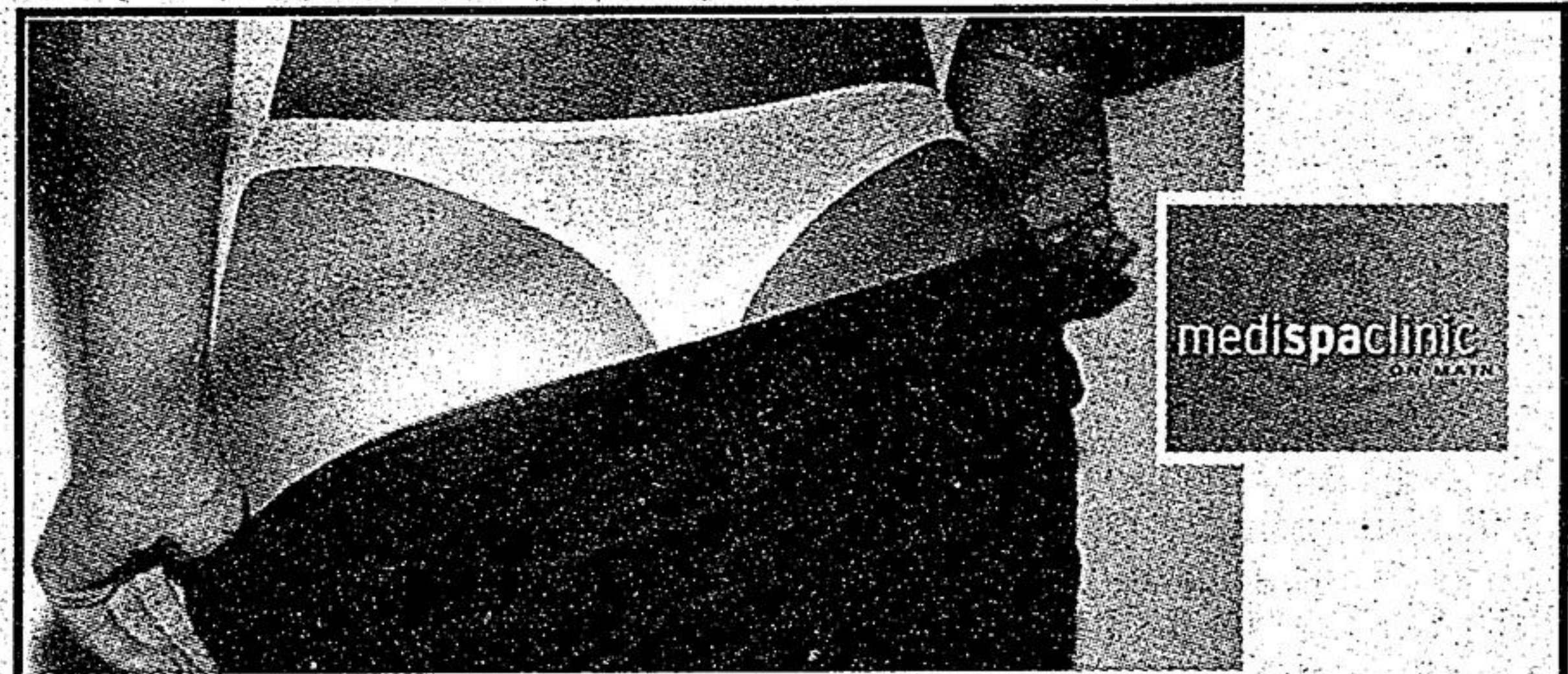
The renovation, including a specialized pediatric area, is estimated to cost \$1.8 million.

For information or to make a donation, contact the Southlake Foundation at 905-836-7333.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Jesse Scime, 5, and his mother Sally help launch a fundraising campaign for the Whipper Watson Pool.



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