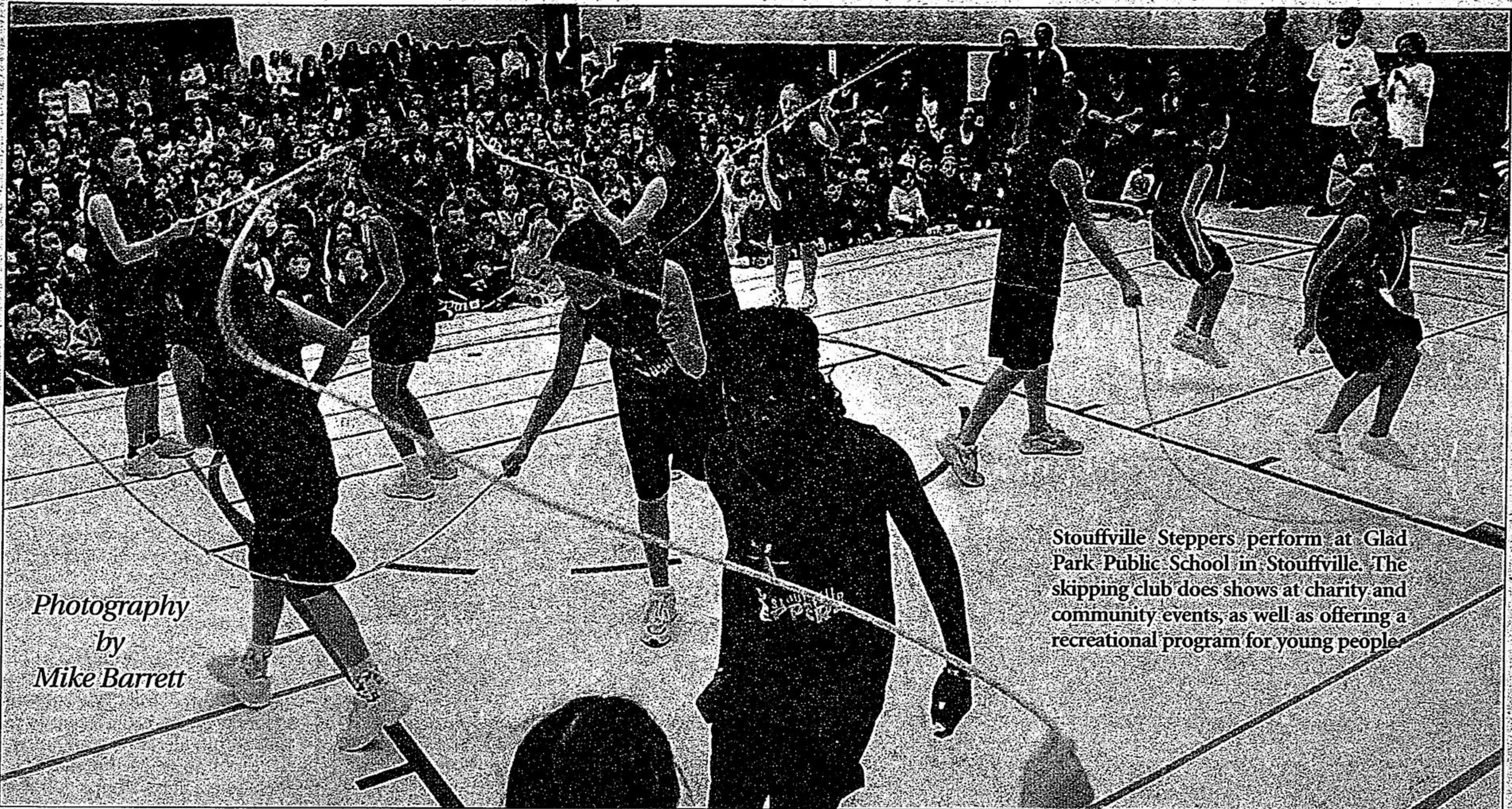


WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE PEOPLE

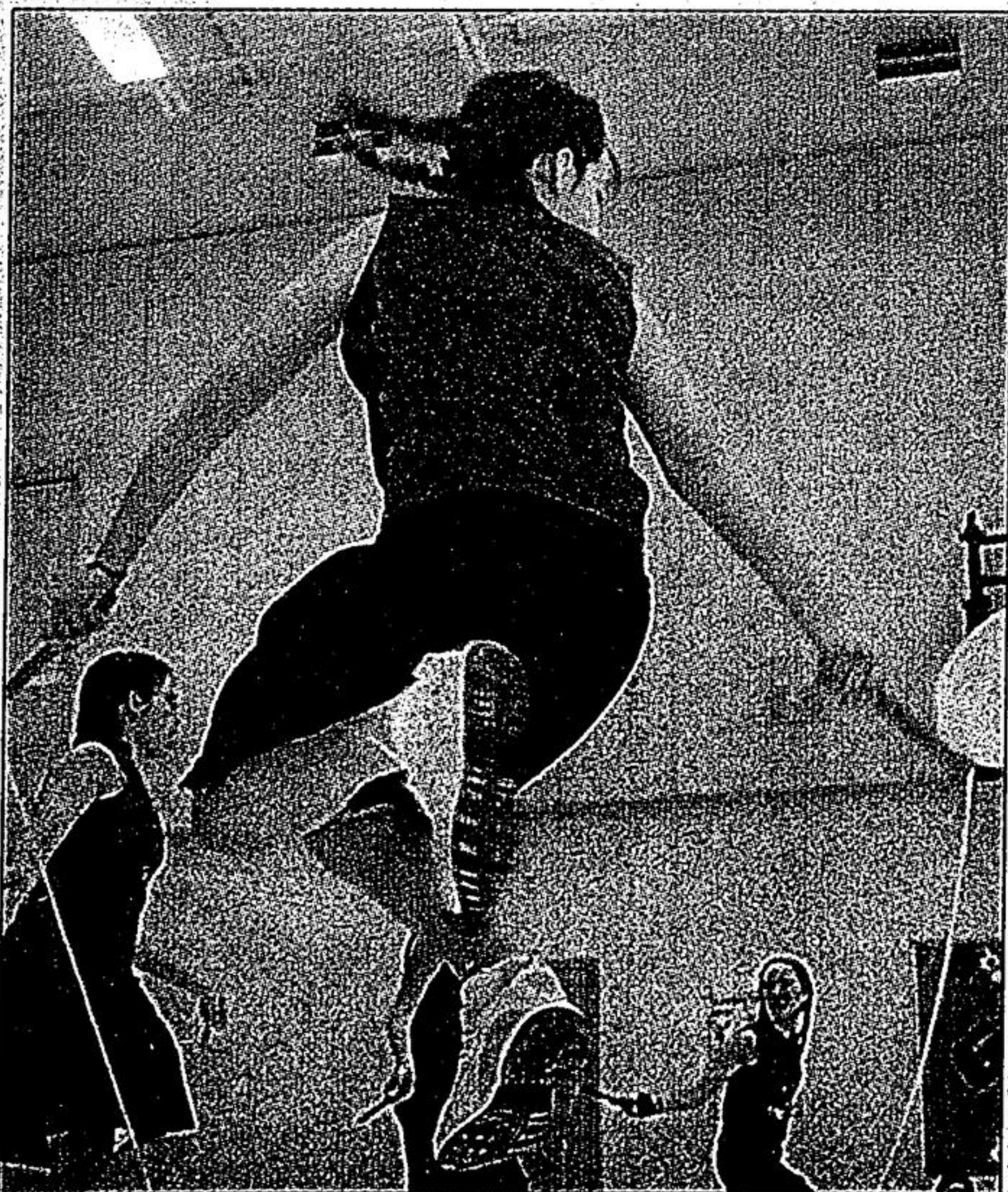


Photography
by
Mike Barrett

Stouffville Steppers perform at Glad Park Public School in Stouffville. The skipping club does shows at charity and community events, as well as offering a recreational program for young people.

Stouffville Steppers skipping team promotes fun and healthy living at public events, schools

Might as well jump!



Kashtin Callaghan defies gravity at Glad Park School event.

BY JIM MASON
Staff Writer

As a child, Nerine Jacobs loved to skip.

She still enjoys the activity, especially passing on her love for it to her Stouffville Steppers team.

Mrs. Jacobs founded the club in 2000 and still coaches it with her sister, Tricia Flaherty.

The unofficial motto? Have fun and promote healthy living while working on your teamwork and dedication skills.

The 16 members are 8 to 14 years old, and their jumping levels range from beginner to skilled.

The synchronized show they put on goes from 15 to 30 minutes and can involve coaching audience members.

And judging by the reaction at an assembly at Glad Park Public School this winter, they're a big hit.

The club is synonymous with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, but members have also skipped the route of the Stouffville Santa Claus Parade and at the Strawberry Festival, as well as other events. Members performed at an Alzheimer's

Society event in Toronto last month.

"I loved to skip as a kid and would always help out at the (Heart and Stroke) Jump Rope events at (Orchard Park Public School)," Mrs. Jacobs said. "I noticed there, that when I showed the kids a game with the ropes that I had grown up with, they would all gather round in large numbers to have a chance to try it with me."

Inspired by the Lincoln Leapers team at the Markham Fair "and wishing I could do what they could do," she worked with one of her daughters on a skipping routine for Orchard Park's spring concert.

The Stouffville Steppers were born.

Membership is now open to students from across Whitchurch-Stouffville. Tryouts are held every September and a recreational program runs all year.

Mrs. Jacobs' daughters, Kendra and Courtney, who have coached the team, still help put together routines.

For more information on the Steppers, call 905-642-8995.



Steppers Caitlin Welham, Cassie Ferguson and Stephanie Kotsopoulos watch the rope.

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