

Sorry, children worth any price we pay

What? \$3,000 to \$4,500 a year to raise a child? Clearly, the person who wrote this attention-grabbing report has never raised a healthy teenage son. That amount covered his grocery tab for six months — if you stretched things a bit and he stayed with friends for the weekend once in a while.

The far end of that scale nears the cost of my daughter's spot on a competitive hockey team for a season, including travel expenses.

Fraser Institute associate and economics professor Chris Sarlo released a research paper on the cost of raising a child that raised some eyebrows and hackles of its own with the conclusion it costs \$3,000 to \$4,500 annually to raise a child.

To clarify, that's the cost for basics only, which, most certainly, wouldn't include a child playing rep hockey or, even perhaps, eating a family-size box of chicken fingers as an after-school snack.

In the wake of some criticism, if not ridicule, Mr. Sarlo issued a rebuttal last week, justifying his focus on basic costs for the average family. Daycare costs, for example, aren't a reality for most families, with 71 per cent of couples with children and 84 per cent of single parent families spending zilch on child care, he says.

As for housing, Mr. Sarlo argues most children live in homes their parents already acquired, with 72 per cent of parents owning homes. Sure, you can attach "additional operating costs" such as hot water (clearly, the guy does know about teenage daughters and 30-minute hot showers), but it would be hard to justify attaching portions of the mortgage and property taxes to a child.

"While there may be cases where parents incur extra costs because they choose to move to a larger home to accommodate an additional child, not all families raising children incur these cost," he says.

My husband, one of seven children, has fond memories of growing up in the four-bedroom home where his parents live to this day.

"Every family will have its own 'cost of a child' related to its own situation. We just can't predict how much they will spend," Mr. Sarlo says.

And there it is; we make choices about how we will raise our children. We can provide the essentials, out of necessity or not, or we can lavishly indulge, whether we can afford to or not — hopefully with an abundance of love and attention in every case.

I couldn't agree more when Mr. Sarlo says, "The amount you spend on your child is not the measure of the quality of your parenting" (though my 17-year-old daughter might disagree).

But he adds, "It would be a shame if we discourage prospective parents by insisting that it costs \$12,000 to \$15,000 (or more) per year to raise a child."

While we are supposedly hardwired to procreate, for most of us, the decision to have a child is an intensely personal one involving all kinds of factors, not just finances.

Ultimately, this study just made me wonder why you would even want to place a cost on raising a child when what they bring to life is immeasurable.

When my newborn son was first placed in my arms, and four years later, my daughter, I literally felt my life change — the meaning of love, joy, pride and protectiveness consciously redefined as I gazed upon their sweet little faces, felt their soft sighs against my skin and the life-affirming grasp of their tiny hands around my finger.

Chicken fingers and rep hockey aside, my children are both priceless and worth any price.



Debora Kelly

C — ROASTING — CHICKENS

We're going to feature our really large air-chilled chickens. To start with, these chickens run loose in really large barns, but by definition these are not 'free-range' because they have no access to the outdoors. They eat as much or as little as they want, usually a lot, of corn and grain. The air-chilled part refers to the de-feathering process and after. Rather than using really hot water to remove the feathers and outside layers of skin, cooler water is used, which leaves the skin on, and unfortunately the odd feathers, a bit of a trade-off really, and then they are left to chill down in circulating air rather than an ice bath. A lot of the flavour of poultry comes from the skin, partially explaining why the anemic white chickens you see are generally flavourless, and wet from the ice-bath. Ours are dry and flavourful, and our guys usually get all the feathers before you do! These chickens average about 5 lbs in size, give or take. **Reg. \$3.29/lb.**

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

— LOCAL SEEDLESS — WATERMELONS!

These are size 35's, which are big, and the local crop has been very nice this year both for flavour and being sweet. While they last... **\$5.99 EACH THIS WEEK**

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE DELI

We'll start with a fresh soup, as usual, this being our Roasted Red Pepper and Tomato, which will be featured at \$5.99 per container. Available in our self-serve counter.

Next, our salad feature this week will be Chickpeas, with diced local tomatoes, sweet peppers, cumin and other spices. Regularly \$1.49/100g, featured this week at 1/3 off

Next, we'll be making Cheese Tortellini in a Parmesan Cream Sauce. This dish will be available in our self-serve counter, and it will be featured at \$5.95 each.

Further, we'll be making a lot of Coconut Breaded Shrimp. These are a 16-20 size (fairly large) and they are shelled, deveined, breaded and deep-fried to golden perfection. They will be available at the prepared food counter, and featured at 1/3 off, regular price being \$2.49 each.

Lastly, we'll be making our Polynesian Turkey. This is made with cubes of turkey, wedges of roasted pineapple, chunks of sweet peppers and sweet onions, served with a slightly sparky chili sauce. It will be sold in 4x5 foils as well, at \$7.95 each in our self-serve counter.

COLD OCEAN COD

We've got some really nice Cod Fillets this week. They come from the St. Andrews area of New Brunswick and are as fresh as can be. Cod like this is a thrill. **\$12.95 /LB THIS WEEK** Eco-friendly and sustainable.

P — TROPICAL SWEET — PINEAPPLES

Just like most other produce, sizing is a large part of purchasing, it's all about getting what you pay for. This is an area where a fresh produce retailer can excel, or, perish the thought, shortchange you. We try to offer the larger sizes of product because, although we usually pay more to get these sizes, it offers better value. Our pineapples are such an item. Whether you get 'Size 5' or 'Size 7', the core is about the same size, with the 'Size 5' having a lot more meat on them, and that's what you pay for. So, these are Size 5's, and they can be had 'au naturel' or peeled and cored. The better value is actually the 'au naturel' style, because there are a lot of good parts trimmed off when coring them.

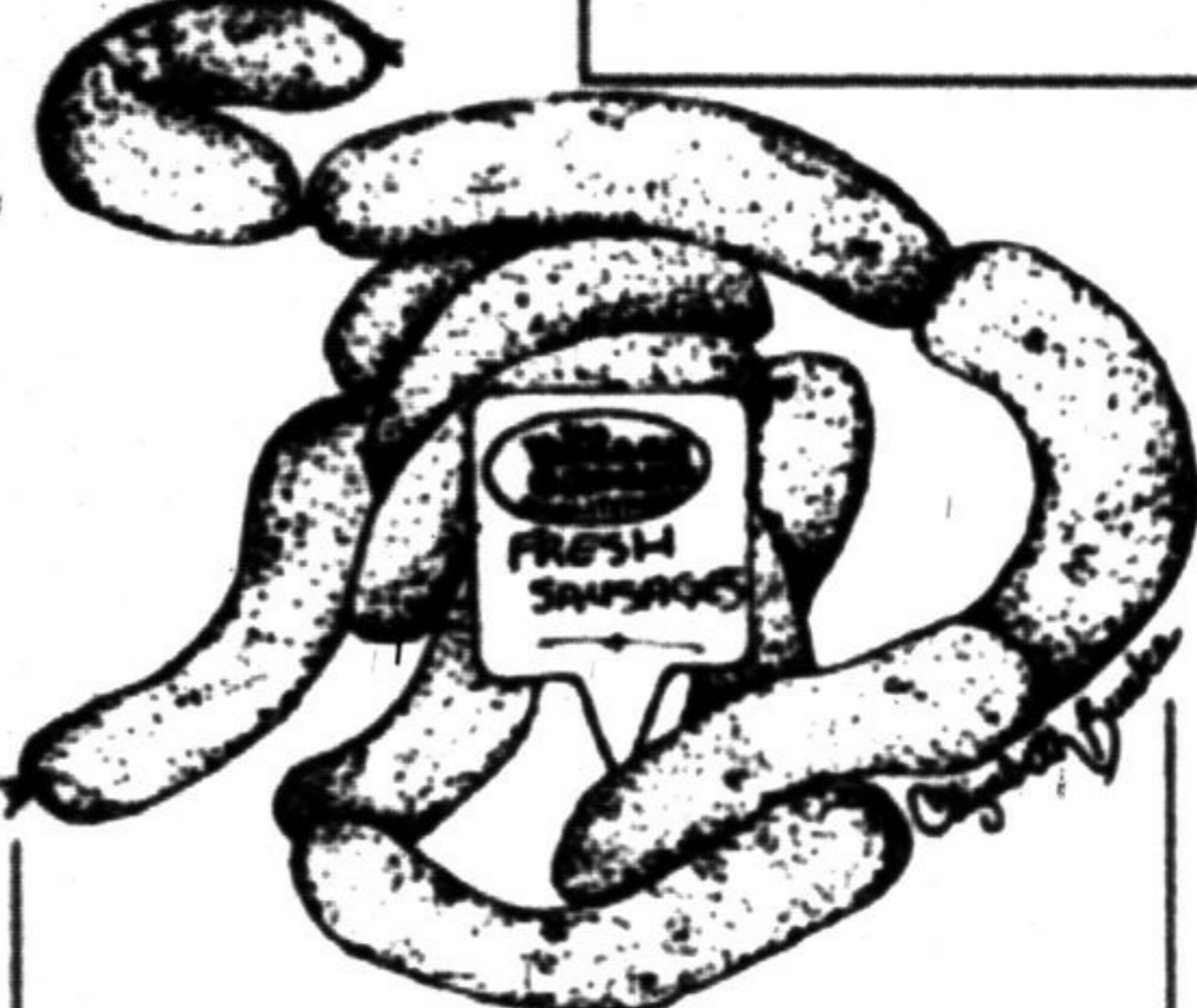
— WHAT'S FOR LUNCH? —

We'll be serving thinly-sliced slow-roasted Beef, piled high, with Asiago, sweet roasted red onions and a roasted garlic aioli. Featured at... **\$7.99 each**

- and -

Sunday Brunch will be our Roasted Pepper and Tomato Soup, followed by either Creamy Cheese Tortellini, Roasted Beef Tenderloin Tips with either Mashed Potatoes or Rice in a Mushroom Gravy, or Chicken Breast in a Flourless Sundried Tomato Sauce... and as usual, we will serve tea or coffee and a small dessert, all for **\$10.95 per person**

\$2.99 EACH THIS WEEK



C — SOME CHEESE PLEASE —

We will be serving up a selection of artisanal Quebec cheeses. They are... 'Le Mamirolle', 'Bleu Benedictin' and 'Le Baluchon', and they will all be featured at 1/3 off their regular retail. As usual, samples will abound, so tasting is believing! **1/3 OFF THIS WEEK**

WE'LL BE MAKING FOCACCIA!

Over the past several weeks, we've been making a selection of these every morning — and they go quickly! They are made in 8x5 foils, deep-dish style. Flavours include, but are not limited to... Sundried Tomato and Black Olive, Caramelized Onion and Chili, Pesto and Goat Cheese, and our popular Pizza. These will be featured at **1/3 OFF THIS WEEK** Buon appetito!

COMING SOON! Grethe will be back soon, and we'll be having Danish Week, the Sequel!

— SAGE & ONION — SAUSAGES

These are a milder sausage that's equally good grilled or oven roasted, and served with mashed potatoes (and gravy!). If you're intolerant of garlic, this is without, but what it has is a mild, mellow, full flavour. **25% OFF THIS WEEK** Regular \$4.99/lb.

— WHAT'S BAKING THIS WEEK? —

BACK TO SCHOOL CHOCOLATE SALE!
TRIPLE CHOCOLATE BROWNIES \$2.99
 A rich, decadent, fudgy, wonderful chocolate creation! Made with lots of butter and melted dark chocolate, with chocolate chunks added for good measure, then iced with chocolate ganache. Mmmmm...

M & M COOKIES and CHOCOLATE CHUNK COOKIES \$7.95/package
 Packed in our octagonal containers, about 20 cookies per container. Enough to share with friends. Perfect for an after-school snack with a big glass of milk.

CHOCOLATE FROSTED CAKES \$14.95 & \$22.95
 Made with our rich chocolate cake (same as the ganache cake) but with a bit sweeter, more "kid-friendly" chocolate frosting. Decorated for "Back-to-School" this week.

CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES \$2.99
 Chocolate cupcakes topped with chocolate frosting, sprinkles and a cookie Apple.

CHOCOLATE BANANA MUFFINS \$1.89
 Banana muffin studded with chocolate chunks. A meal in itself! And as usual, all these items will be featured at **25% OFF THIS WEEK**

SPECIALS IN EFFECT FROM THURSDAY TO CLOSING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH



Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:00-8:00
 Sat. 8:00-6:00 - Sun. 9:00-6:00
 4476 16th Avenue (Just W. of Kennedy)
 (905) 940-0655



Debora Kelly is editor in chief of the York Region Media Group.