

# 'Sisters' celebrate decade of caring

Formal relationship ends but friendship continues to evolve

By Claudia D'Souza  
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

It's been a wonderful decade-long journey for Big Sister, Raymonde Worsfeld and her Little Sister, Baljinder. But this past July, their match officially came to an end when Baljinder turned 18.

Well-known within the community having served as president of Oakville Big Sisters for eight years (1989 - 1998), Raymonde looks back on their milestone with great fondness.

"It's hard to believe it's been 10 years. I first met Baljinder on July 1, 1989 when she was seven-years-old. It's funny because I was almost matched with another girl, but we met instead and hit it off. It was a twist of fate really - we were lucky."

Way back in 1989, Raymonde was new to Oakville and wanted to do some volunteer work. After some research, Big Sisters piqued her interest since she didn't have children of her own and felt she had lots of love to give. Over the years, she and Baljinder developed a close friendship based on mutual respect and trust, but it did start out tentatively.

Since Baljinder is Sikh, her mom was anxious to find the right person who exposed her daughter to different experiences, but also understood and respected cultural differences. She found her fears were quickly allayed when she met her daughter's match.

"We have done so much together," Raymonde reminisces. "I taught her how to swim and ski and to get over her fear of cats. I took her to Centre Island for picnics, the ballet and the symphony. We baked and went horseback riding, and I introduced her to different foods. I tried to get her to experiment and go outside the box to get past her fears."

Relaxing, candlelit dinners on Sundays with Raymonde, her husband Michael and other family members and friends became one of Baljinder's favorite pastimes.

"The first time she came over for dinner we lit candles and it became a ritual," notes Raymonde, a local yoga instructor. "One day she came up with a question, 'what's new with you?' We'd go around the table asking each



Raymonde Worsfeld and Baljinder: decade of 'sisterhood' ended but friendship continues.

person and you couldn't make it up - it really got you thinking about what happened to you that week. She's a very unique person, she loves conversation, likes to be involved and just hang out." Raymonde believes they've developed a strong, intimate bond because they communicate on the same level as friends despite the age difference.

"She's always been very mature, genuine, honest and very open. She tells me everything. I love her openness, her curiosity, and her great ability to fit in anywhere. It's been very grounding for me. Even during very trying times, she'd tell me 'hang loose,

just let it go,' feeding back to me what I'd tell her."

Recently, on the occasion of their 10th and final official year together, Baljinder presented Raymonde with a colourful scrapbook of memories. The book was prefaced with a heartfelt, two-page letter Baljinder penned with care.

"I wish I could explain to you how special you are to me," she wrote. "You have been one of the most influential people in my life. I cannot begin to imagine my life without you. They say parents only look out for the best interests of their children. Well, I have to say, the best thing my mom could have done for me was make that call to Big Sisters because it brought us together. Ray, throughout our relationship you have brought out the best in me. I would like to say thank you for everything you have done. You are the 'bestest' friend a girl could ask for."

"I bawled my eyes out when I read that letter," Raymonde admits. "It's been a pleasure. You say to yourself, 'If I had a kid, I'd want her to be just like her.' For us, this is a lifetime friendship."

This fall, Baljinder will begin earning her master's degree in pharmacology in London, England. She will be away from home for four years, visiting home when she can, and will keep in touch with Raymonde via e-mail.

Now that Baljinder is off to university overseas, Ray says she feels a sense of loss along with a great sense of pride.

## You can help too

You can support Big Sisters by doing any of the following:

Volunteer to be matched with one of 23 Little Sisters currently on a waiting list or join a committee. Support the organization's programs by purchasing a \$10 Lottery Calendar or make a donation to support a specific area like the One-to-One Friendship program, monthly recreation fund, camp placement or the Resource Centre After School Homework Helpers program.

"We also have a special fund in honour of Raymonde designed to further develop our Little Sisters special talents," says Markow. "In February, we welcome community groups to hold special events on our behalf."

Tax receipts are issued for all donations. Phone 338-0238 for more information.

## Fun run tonight

The Running Company holds its Wednesday Evening Fun Runs for both beginners and veteran runners. Meet at the store, 118 Thomas Street at 7 p.m. Call 815-1952 for information.

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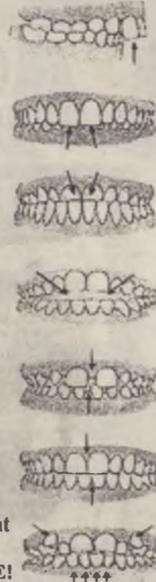
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# Smoke-free target 2002

By Irene Gentle  
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

The Halton Regional Health Department (HRHD) is hoping Halton will be smoke free by Jan. 1, 2002.

And despite the misgivings of some councillors, the Region's health and social services committee endorsed a request that the four municipalities amend their current butt bylaws to incorporate that deadline.

But going smoke free could be playing with fire, worried Burlington councillor Linda Schreiber.

She cited hardships faced by the service industry in areas that have already enforced a smoking ban.

"This 100% has become very worrisome to me," she said. "I think we need to be cognizant of areas around us."

But by 2002, the effect will be the same, said the Region's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Bob Nosal.

"By the time we do this, everyone around us will be smoke free," he said.

He challenged the notion that businesses take a nose dive when a butt ban is in place.

"There's enough research out there to show that business goes up, not down," said Dr. Nosal. "That's not an issue."

If the municipalities agree, it will be the second time local smoking bylaws have been tweaked to conform to a region-wide vision.

The first came in May, 1998. At that time, Dr. Nosal entered into discussions with the municipalities to create a consistent policy throughout Halton.

Burlington and Oakville already have compatible bylaw.

Milton came through last February with a bylaw directing restaurants to provide no more than 30% of seating space for smokers.

And a new bylaw is expected to come into effect April, 2000 in Halton Hills.

It cuts smoking space in restaurants down to 25%.

## REGION OF HALTON PUBLIC NOTICE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT DUNDAS STREET (REGIONAL ROAD No. 5) AND BRONTE ROAD (REGIONAL ROAD No. 25) TOWN OF OAKVILLE PR-1800

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Sections 297 and 300 of the Municipal Act, R. S. O. 1990, chapter M 45 as amended, that the Council for the Regional Municipality of Halton proposes at its meeting on Wednesday March 29, 2000 at 9:30 a.m. to pass a by-law for the intersection improvements at Dundas Street and Bronte Road in the form of lane extensions for the southbound through/right-turn and left turn lanes on Bronte Road approaching Dundas Street and the extension of the existing southbound merge lane and taper on Bronte Road, south of Dundas Street, Town of Oakville.

Plans showing the proposed work may be inspected at the Planning & Public Works Department, Halton Regional Centre, 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, Ontario.

On Wednesday, March 22, 2000 at 9:30 a.m. in the Halton Room at the Halton Regional Centre, 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, Ontario, Council, through its Planning and Public Works Committee will hear in person or by his/her Counsel, any person who claims that his/her lands will be prejudicially affected by the said by-law and who applies to the Regional Clerk no later than Tuesday, March 8, 2000, to be heard.

For further information, please contact:  
Mr. J. Choi, P. Eng., Manager, Design Services  
Phone: (905) 825-6030, extension 7610

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