

Group home head takes charge of troubled teens

By RUTH HELGASON

Charlie Knight is not the shy and retiring type but, as the new director of Armagh House, a Meadow Wood Rd. group home for teenage girls, he can't afford to be.

A '75 graduate of Humber College's child care worker program, Mr. Knight comes to Armagh House from a stint at the emergency house of Thistleton Regional Centre for Children and Adolescents.

He will now be responsible for providing guidance and encouragement for 18 female charges.

Mr. Knight, a 32-year-old bachelor, exudes self-confidence, understanding and approachability. He says he understands emotionally disturbed teenagers, is a good clinician and a good therapist.

Armagh House, formerly a home for unwed mothers, is scheduled to re-open officially Dec. 3 under its new guise. The home is one of the few licensed facilities for teenagers in Peel.

The occupants will include six pregnant teenagers, eight girls referred by Children's Aid and four from other sources.

They share similar problems that make it impossible for them to live at home. These problems could include minor delinquency, social withdrawal and chronic disobedience.

Armagh is funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Presbyterian Church and private donations.

Twelve front-line staff — comprised of nine qualified child care workers and three assistants — will try to find the root of each girl's emotional problems and recommend a preventative and reactive treatment program.

"The key to treatment is consistent staff," said Mr. Knight. "Teenagers need routines in their life. It is necessary for them to feel safe and secure."

Adolescents are expert at pinpointing weaknesses, he said, and it is essential for staff to be on guard.

"My staff will have to know where the kid is at and where they are at themselves," Mr. Knight added. "They must have a high level of awareness and the ability to deal with intangibles."

Each teenager undergoes an intensive interview with staff to

ascertain Armagh is the right place for her.

The staff has formulated non-negotiable house rules and is in the process of developing a privilege system. Dating will be an earned privilege and grounding will be used as a discipline measure.

Upon admission, each teenager is assessed in detail into the following areas: motor abilities, speech, thinking, biological functions, grooming and appearance, daily routine, body language, fears and fantasies, responsibility, judgment, interests, play

creativity, peer relationships, staff relationships, reaction to authority, school, self-esteem, caring, addictions, parental contacts, community involvement, handling techniques.

The completed forms are filed to enable new staff members to obtain an immediate picture of the teenager with whom he is dealing.

Education will be continued at Armagh with the help of two special education teachers. Mr. Knight hopes to include special interest programs such as a craft room with the help of senior citizen volunteers.



Charlie Knight, director of Armagh House

Bingo bonanza for city groups

The Canadian Red Cross Mississauga District, the Boy Scouts of Canada Malton Thunderbird Club and the Peel Amateur Radio Club each received \$500 from Charities Co-operative.

Norm Kelman, chairman of the Charities Co-operative, said funds are raised from nightly bingo at the International Centre on Airport Road.

The Charities Co-operative includes the Malton Beneficent Association, the Circle Lodge of B'nai Brith, the Hadassah Haifa Chapter of Women, Our Lady of the Airways Church, Adath Sholom Synagogue, Solel Congregation, St. Demetrius Church and St. Basil's College School.

PCs hold meeting

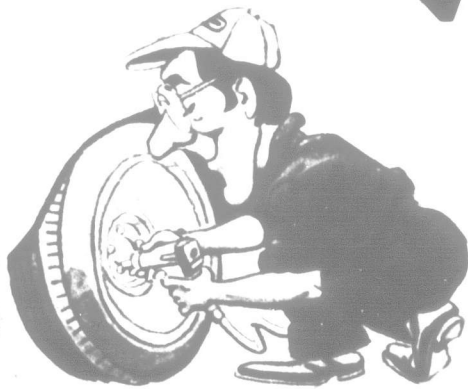
The Mississauga South Federal Progressive Conservative Association will hold a meeting to elect delegates for the national convention Nov. 26 at Riverside Public School at 8 p.m.

Robert Coates, national president of the PC party, will be guest speaker.

For information call Judy Tutty at 826-5800 or 278-5868.

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