



Making Friends

The Signpost, July 26, 2006.

Walter Gretzky visited the Down Syndrome Research Institute (DSRI) in London which is operated by Dorchester resident Andy Loebus on Monday, and introduced himself to Sabrina Lavazzi and the other 23 participants in the class. Gretzky, whose sister Ellen had Down Syndrome, visited with the students and chatted with them about how much they like the program. The main office is in Dorchester and they also use Sir George Ross Secondary School and Northbrae Elementary School in London as a place where children with Down Syndrome can start to facilitate their independence. There are 12 children in each class, with the elementary students going to Northbrae and the high school students going to Sir George Ross. This summer program helps children with Down Syndrome develop vital skills needed for living and it runs from July 4th to July 28th. The program employs teachers, and a speech pathologist is always on hand for constant communication between the students and the teachers. This program encourages students to have fun through learning and being creative. The DSRI is partners with the Down Syndrome Research Foundation (DSRF) located in Burnaby, British Columbia. Contact Loebus at 519-268-1303 to register for next summer.