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New parent supporter given award

By MARTA MARYCHUK

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The Peel Children's Centre has presented it's Mary Neville Award to Eileen Beltzner, from Aid for New Mothers, for her work in prevention and early intervention in children's mental health.

As executive director of Aid for New Mothers, Beltzner provides non-medical support for new parents. By giving parents information and support, Beltzner believes abusive situations can be avoided.

Beltzner was presented the award at the annual meeting of the Peel Children's Centre in Mississauga on Tuesday.

The award was established last year in the name of former Peel Children's Centre prevention co-ordinator Mary Neville, who was the first recipient of the award.

Aid for New Mothers is a non-profit organization, with chapters in Halton/Peel and Toronto. the organization is run almost entirely by volunteers. Beltzner, who is also a volunteer, has been executive director since 1986.

According to Beltzner, the organization was founded in 1974 by a group of women who wanted to provide new parents with information which would make the transition to parenthood easier.

Most people consider parenting "common sense" said Beltzner, a parent infant educator and a special care councillor. "But it isn't common sense."

"New parents are born at the hospital," she said. Most of them don't have a role model on which to pattern their own behavior on.

In addition to her work with Aid for New Mothers, Beltzner has also written a handbook for first-time parents. Published in 1988, the book provides some information on a wide range of subjects, including infant development, the mother's postpartum body safety, babysitters and sexual relations.

Beltzner also helped to establish a 24-hour telephone hotline, to provide non-medical support for new parents. She is currently working toward bringing a hospital-based postpartum program to Peel.

Meanwhile, Women of Variety, the Variety Club and the employees of Canadian Airlines International all received certificates of appreciation Tuesday night. Paul Kaye, a member of the board of directors for the Peel Children's Centre and June Berndt, a volunteer librarian for the centre both received certificates of recognition.

The Peel Children's Centre provides counselling and treatment services for children and their families living in Peel.



BELTZNER