



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Car wash raises money for cancer

Zoey Van Dyk, Kaylee DeRooy and Karlie Willcocks organized their class from St. Mary's Catholic School to raise money for the Cancer Society at a car wash held July 2. The 16 volunteers washed more than a 100 vehicles and raised \$1,200.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Athletes of the year

Katie Lyons and Josh Duplessis were named Senior Athletes of the Year at the West Elgin Secondary School Athletic Banquet held May 27.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Teachers taped to wall for charity

Cindy McDowell gets taped by Amber Reid while teachers Dave Burke (wearing a Santa beard) and Dan Kajan hang, taped to the wall in the cafeteria at West Elgin Secondary School during a lunch-hour tsunami relief fundraiser Monday. See page 8 to learn about other fundraising efforts from around the area.



WESS band holds spring show

Rhonda Knight and Jennifer Drummelsmith play Trish-Trash Polka on baritone saxophones with the WESS concert band at the spring concert June 8.



SUBMITTED

WESS helps Kittmer

On June 12 the students from West Elgin Secondary School took part in the Rick Hansen Event at Parkwood Hospital in London with Colin Kittmer of West Lorne who raced. Student names: Jeff Reno, Derik Reno, Chris Wemp, Matt Pfeifer, Sarah Hamelin, Craig Hoglund, Ann Pfeifer, Shawn Carroll, Chantelle Sadecky, Adam Timmermans, Caitlin VanRaes, Phil Ouellette.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

St. Mary's students get bike helmets

Grade 4 students at St. Mary's Catholic School all received bike helmets for taking part in a railway crossing safety poster contest held by the St. Thomas Elgin Community Safety Committee June 27.



Junior Girls win WOSSA

West Elgin Junior Girls Volleyball won gold at Thames Valley and WOSSA. Back row: Coach Meegan Campbell, Sherri Ford, Courtney Besley, Erica McDowell, Danielle Wilson, Karen Godfrey, Kaitlyn Duplessis, Coach Christina Cunningham. Middle, Caroline Levesley, Tara Kretchmer, Kaylie Wood, Brittany Carreia. Front: Emily Kalmbach, Rhonda Knight.

SUBMITTED



APS learns Winter Safety JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

West Elgin Community Policing held a colouring contest at Aldborough Public School to teach winter safety. From left to right: Emily Miller and Blake Wright won in the Grade 2 and 3 category, Jaimee Parcels and Daniel Alderton won in the Grade 4, 5, 6 category. Silvia Logan presented the cash awards. Eric Larson and Evan Van Dyk, won for the kindergarten and Grade 1 categories.



TAG! JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Justin Delgado is tagged by Sabrina Oliveira during a tag-a-thon held at St. Mary's Catholic School in West Lorne and across Ontario Thursday to encourage physical activity. Students played many types of tag, this one is octopus tag.



WESES Jazz Band holds concert

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Brooke Willson, left, Kristyn Fishleigh and Sara Vandaele play Jamaican Holiday on flutes during Spring Notes, the West Elgin Senior Elementary School's music department's spring show directed by music teacher Lynn Gracey.

Steps toward deal made with WEDS

WEDS is willing to give 50 cents for every ticket sold to its shows to the municipality to rent the theatre on the second floor of the Town Hall in Dutton.

The offer comes as the community theatre group and the municipality continued negotiating a new lease agreement at the June 15 council meeting.

Jerry Galbraith is negotiating on behalf of the West Elgin Dramatics Society.

In response to a February letter from the municipality, he brought the group's counter offer to the table.

Mayor Bonnie Vowel said the counteroffer showed WEDS was meeting the municipality halfway.

The municipality was looking for \$350 for each seasonal performance the group did in the new lease agreement.

WEDS pays no rent in the current lease agreement which expires in 2007.

"Fifty-cents can be backed up. It's not something you can't afford," Vowel said to Galbraith.

He said the group has compromised with the new offer and it gives the volunteer group the ability to stay financially viable.

He said, at the groups spring concert, the new 50 cent policy would have generated about \$250 for the municipality.

At WEDS' fall concert, it would have generated \$300.

"That seems like a solution to me," said Galbraith.

Neither Vowel and Administrator Ken Loveland nor other councillors commented on other parts of WEDS' counteroffer at the meeting.

In past discussions, the municipality has expressed it wants WEDS to help get more people and groups renting the facility.

WEDS is looking at hiring someone to help with marketing the theatre outside of the community.

Vowel said council would consider the rest of the counteroffers and get back to WEDS.

Both sides hoped the rift in the the relationship's past was behind them.



WESES readers going to Toronto

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

About 21 students from WESES took part in the Red Maple reading program. The students read five books and then voted by ballot for the best new Canadian writer. Nine of the students were drawn to travel to Toronto to the Red Maple Awards and may get to present an award to the winning authors.

WESS winds down this week

COLUMN

It has been a fabulous year at West Elgin Secondary school. It is a very exciting time now, as graduates have received their acceptances to colleges and universities, job offers for summer or full-time work, and all students write their final exams and hand in their final course assignments.

I am constantly amazed and so very proud of the academic accomplishments of our students. Many are finishing the year with averages in the high eighties and nineties. Our second year of the WEST program, which sees students from Grades 9 - 12 having work placements which complement their in-class studies, has been extremely successful. The entire WESS community is so grateful for the support of the many employers in the community who have taken in and helped to train and educate our students. These wonderful employers, the students and teachers were all honoured at a banquet held on June 15.

We have had a great year in sports, with many successful teams, including a renewed track and field team. Congratulations to our athletes and coaches, and thanks to the community coaches who have once again stepped forward to assist our staff in running these teams. In the arts, our bands, drama classes and visual arts classes have all had a stellar year, with new awards being won, successful concerts and plays being performed, and some wonderful new murals adorning the walls of the school.

There are again a number of construction projects happening at the school this summer, as the Board and the Ministry continue to invest in our community school. We will be getting new boilers for our heating system, a new roof on about one-third of the school, some drains which have been problematic will be replaced. We will also be installing a new trophy and awards display case on the wall outside of the gymnasium, constructed by Calmbrook Construction, so that we can proudly display our many sports trophies. In



Principal's Corner

Larry Schneider

addition, there will be some painting and computer upgrades. In our Library and Technology Departments, special Ministry funding will allow for several tens of thousands of dollars worth of new books, programs and equipment to be purchased to further enhance opportunities and resources for our students.

Sadly, we are losing four valued staff members this year, who are moving on to

new challenges in their careers: Jamie Fraser, our Head of Guidance is going to Parkhill, Jennifer Nielsen, our Head of Geography, is going to London Central SS, Becky Doyle, our Head of History is going to East Elgin, and Cynthia McDowell, our Head of English will be moving to Sir George Ross SS in London as Vice-Principal. We will miss these wonderful educators, but wish them well in their new pursuits. We have hired a number of new teachers for the school, and will continue to do so over the coming days.

In January students completed a survey about Safe Schools, focussing on the topic of bullying. We are now studying those results, and a team made up of students, parents, teachers, and community members is developing an action plan for our school in response to the survey.

Our enrollment next year will reach a new high, in recent memory, with approximately 585 students being registered here for September. This will allow us to have additional teachers and course offerings. Incoming Grade 8 students have visited the school recently for a tour and welcome barbecue, and we look forward to seeing them here in the fall.

Report cards will be available for pickup at the school office starting on July 5, and student timetables for next year will be mailed out in the middle of August.

I wish everyone in the WESS community a safe and happy summer, once again thank the community for its wholehearted support of this small rural school, and look forward to another great school year in 2005 -2006.



WESS helps Jesse's Journey

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Students from West Elgin Secondary School held a fundraiser for Jesse's Journey April 1 at the school and raised \$850. John Davidson, Jesse's father, centre, came to accept a check from: Paul Gallant, left, shop teacher who helped with a car wash, Maryjo McWilliam, student president, Justin McCallum, Colin Reid, Nicole Stallon, front, Brandyn Cook and Carolyn Smith.



Schools hold Fun Days

Left: Jessie Linton gets pushed by Kassie Burgy in a wheelbarrow race at the Aldborough Public School Fun Day June 21. Jayden Myers runs from Paul Dieker who spryed him with a water gun at the St. Mary's Catholic School Fun Day June 23.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

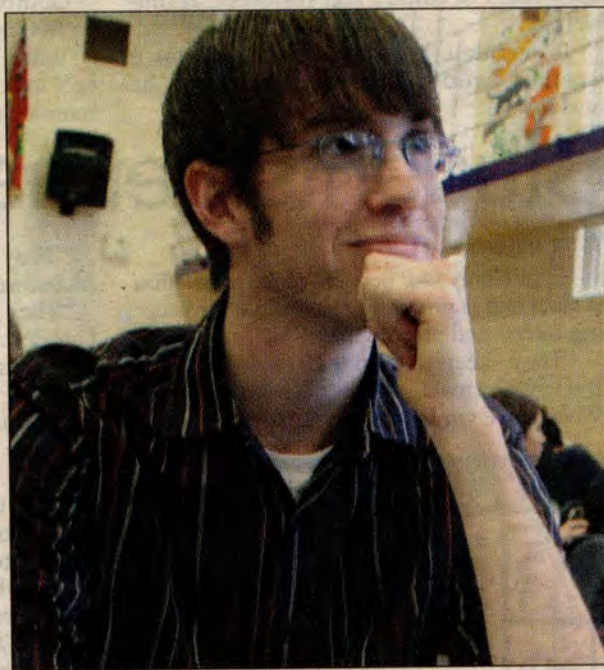


Aldborough holds funfair

Aldborough Public School's parent council held its annual fundraising funfair Feb. 24. Left: Ryan Alderton walked the plank to drop a coin in a bag while Lucas Given supervises. Centre: Andrew and Marcel Wright spin the wheel for a prize. Right: Samantha Clark tosses a bean bag.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Student gets huge scholarship



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Imagine the opportunities

Wallacetown's Mark Godfrey imagines all the opportunities that opened up when he learned he was one of 30 in Canada to receive a special scholarship for \$75,000.

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

A Wallacetown teen is one of a handful of people to receive a \$75,000 scholarship across Canada.

Mark Godfrey received the scholarship from the Canada Merit Scholarship Foundation.

"It's big," he said, in the noisy cafeterium at the high school.

Excited at first to learn his university education will be paid for, Godfrey is just starting to understand all the opportunities the scholarship has created.

CMSF hands out 30 scholarships across Canada out of 3,500 applications.

One great thing is the scholarship can be used at 25 universities in Canada which gives Godfrey the flexibility to shop himself around.

A musician, he starts auditions in the coming weeks and is narrowing down which university he wants to get into.

"I have to decide if I want to be a performing artist or have a stable job one day," he said.

Nicknamed Spider, for his amazing long, fast fingers, Godfrey advanced to the senior band in his first year of high school.

He's played at many community events with friends, always pleasing the crowd with his endless energy and huge playlist.

"He has been on our radar since the day he walked in the door back in Grade 9," said Principal Larry Schneider. "This is a big deal."

His 92 per cent academic average, being captain of the senior basketball team and co-captain of the vol-

leyball team, along with performing in the school band helped get the scholarship.

His community service and leadership nailed it down.

The scholarship recipients have to demonstrate outstanding service to their community, character, leadership potential, entrepreneurial energy and academic excellence, a CMSF press release said.

Among his activities, he has helped his father establish the Kent Regional Alternative Ministry, a youth group at the Duart Presbyterian Church.

Godfrey said teachers, friends and the community have supported so much throughout high school but his father, Rev. Tom Godfrey has had the biggest influence on his life.

Please see Godfrey, page 2



Career fair held at WESS

Josh Giles explains his work placement at the University of Western Ontario's software engineering department to teacher Marsha Hughes at the West Elgin Secondary School Career Fair June 20. Students in the cooperative education program participated.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE



New computer lab at St. Mary's

Principal John Lavereau, with teacher Joanne Anderson, parent councillor Don Ciparis and Tammy Kovacs on the fundraising committee unveiled St. Mary's Catholic School's new computer lab June 20. The parent council and school raised \$10,000 and the school board and province gave \$12,000 each to redo the room and buy 31 new computers and software for the school.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE



DADS CAN COOK...

Blair Ferguson fries up some rainbow trout in the kitchen at the West Elgin Community Health Centre in West Lorne, June 24. Ferguson and four other fathers took part in a cooking seminar with dietician Allison Little. The seminar was part of the Dad to Dad group where fatherly advice is shared.



Gord Fansher shows his parmesan pepper fillets at the men's cooking night. Fansher leads the Dad to Dad group and is a member of Dad's Can in London. Participating dads practiced cooking a variety of fish-based meals as an alternative to meat and potatoes.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE



HEALTHY DONATION

CONTRIBUTED

Jerry Prince, vice chair of the West Elgin Community Health Centre receives \$6,000 for the centre from the Perovich family, represented by Dan Perovich Sr. and Mike Perovich Jr.

Health centre interviewing new doctors

Province gives \$225,593

JEFF KEMPENAAR

staff

Increased chiropody (foot care) and a part-time clinical staff manager will be hired at West Elgin Community Health Clinic with an additional \$225,593 coming from the province.

A staff manager is required by the province to oversee the nursing staff.

The money will go to the centre's base budget from the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care that is about \$2.081 million.

"This is extremely helpful," said Doug Graham, executive administrator at WEHC.

"This new funding will enable the WEHC to reach even more people who need access to basic health care in their community," said Elgin-Middlesex-London MPP Steve Peters in a media release.

The centre is currently recruiting physicians in hopes of hiring two full-time doctors to fill vacancies.

"We're hopeful our patient roster will go way up and waiting lists will be eliminated," said Graham.

He said recruiting new physicians is a challenge and it may be a few months before the centre will have three full-time doctors on call.

A part-time physician has been trialling at the centre, helping with the current patient load.

Graham said Community Health Centre doctors were the lowest paid in the province and he hopes if these doctors are included in wage increases, recruitment

and retention challenges will be eased.

Recently, the Ontario Medical Association, the union representing physicians, has been negotiating with the provincial government for a new contract.

The province is proposing incentives to encourage physicians to join "harmonized models" but Graham hasn't seen yet if that will mean physicians working at CHCs will reap the incentives.

Graham believes memberships will double to around 6,000 patients served by a family doctor at the centre when the new physicians are hired.

He said the centre will not become a walk-in clinic but hopefully be able to provide access to a family doctor for the entire catchment area.

While the funding is good news, Graham said it balances inequities between urban health programming and rural health programming.

"Rural programs were very poorly funded," said Graham.

Also, the community health worker who makes house calls to the area's senior community will become full-time from part-time.

He said the money will also go to salary increases and facility operating costs, areas that have not seen an increase in funding in 12 years.

The money will arrive next month and be immediately used to help pay rent, hydro and telephone costs freeing up money for staff salary increases and new staff.



Vera McCrady of Dutton tosses a sticky ball at a glass target to win prizes at the Seniors Day in the Park.



The MJM Jazz Trio and Shirley Walker and Francis Sobieralski performed at the WEHC Seniors Day in the Park.



Bob-Bob-A-Lou had Jean and Elmer Hunte doing a polka at the West Elgin Community Health Centre's Seniors Day in the Park held June 30 at Old Boys Park in Port Glasgow.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE



CELEBRATING DADS...

Organizers were happy with the turnout of parents, especially fathers, who came to the West Elgin Community Health Centre's Let's Connect's program called "A Celebration of Dads." The event featured a recreation fair and a guest speaker from Dad's Can, an organization that encourages fathers to take an active role in

the upbringing of their children. At left, Andy and Marie Welch speak to Gordon Fisher of Dad's Can. At right, Katelyn Bailey (left) and Shelby Pyka learn about good posture from Chrisoula VanOirschot of Country Care Massage Therapy.

Chronicle photo

Bed closures not acceptable

■ Mayor hopes community will fight with school-closure enthusiasm

JEFF KEMPENAAR
staff

A plan to close 20 beds at Four Counties Health Services in Newbury has drawn comparison by administrators and public officials to the threat of closing schools.

"If beds are closed, it is important people stand up and say under the Canadian Health Act we won't have access to healthcare and we'll be treated as second class citizens," said West Elgin Mayor Graham Warwick. "Once they close those beds, we'll never get them back."

He hopes the community can rally with the same momentum to save beds at the hospitals as they did to save schools from being closed.

But the future of the hospital is safe according to Sarah Padfield, coordinator with the Alliance.

The Alliance is recruiting six to seven people for a community advisory committee for FCHS in hopes to get more input on decisions from people in the catchment area.

The committee will have the foundation chair and either Padfield or the CEO Mike Mazza on it and a representative from West Elgin Community Health Centre,

making the committee 10 to 12 people.

The Alliance is still looking for people to be on the committee.

The committee will file reports to the board, providing valuable information on

mittee at the hospital, Warwick hopes the public will have a better idea how money is spent at the hospital and can help the Alliance lobby the provincial government for equal money.

The urban-oriented provincial government is using misguided formulas to fund hospitals in big cities and rural centre, said Warwick.

He said the Alliance has got to be open to effectively lobby the government with the community.

Brad Banded, executive committee member with the Alliance said the public should provide more input on their need for the hospital and services.

He said he represents the West Elgin area and wants to hear from people here about the hospital.

Padfield said the corporation has tried to reach the community with a community newsletter and feedback link on the FCHS web site.

"We haven't received any mail," she said.

She said the Alliance is accountable to the provincial government to provide high quality service with a balanced budget because the government is the main source of revenue for the hospital.

Continued on Page 2



Graham Warwick

"If beds are closed, it is important people stand up and say...we'll be treated as second class citizens."

local needs and concerns.

Padfield hopes the group could get together before the board's next meeting where the balanced budget will be tabled.

She said the executive committee has been pulling numbers and may have other solutions for cost savings to balance the \$1.7 million budget deficit for FCHS.

The reason for the rally for schools was effective, said Warwick was people like Tracy Grant, an accommodation review committee member, had access to budgetary information from Thames Valley District School Board.

With a new advisory com-

The Chronicle

Volunteer drivers shared with FACS in partnership

By Scott Hilgendorff
The Chronicle

It takes some creative thinking to overcome some of the limitations of living in a rural community and a partnership of local organizations has done that to address one agency's shortage of volunteers.

"It's a creative solution to a rural challenge," said Lorilyn Smith, volunteer coordinator at Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin.

The agency has numerous children in foster homes in western Elgin County who require regular trips to St. Thomas or London.

Smith was having a hard time finding volunteer drivers to help transport the children back and forth.

"When it comes to recruiting, in a rural setting it can be a difficult and daunting task," said Smith.

Meanwhile, the West Elgin Community Health Centre has a list of more than 120 volunteer drivers who help take people back and forth, particularly seniors, for medical, dental or personal appointments.

Without volunteer drivers and no bus transportation back and forth to London or St. Thomas, many seniors have a difficult time getting to appointments or services that can't be accommodated in the area.

Shelley Vergeer of the West Elgin Community Health Centre said people need help just getting from one village to the other.

Through the health centre, they developed a strong network of drivers.

"It would seem West Elgin is abundant with volunteers who aren't always busy," said Smith.

She approached Vergeer last year and asked if there was a way they could work together.

With a strong list of active volunteers Vergeer said many drivers were not being kept busy and were glad to have a chance to do more.

It became a simple matter to set things up with Nancy Mott of West Elgin Community Support Services who dispatched the drivers for the health centre.

Now, she dispatches them for both agencies and said the support of the volunteers in West Elgin is incredible.



Lorilyn Smith, Nancy Mott and Shelley Vergeer have found a rural solution to a volunteer "shortage".

Chronicle photo

"They are very loyal to these communities," she said, having no difficulty finding drivers available for either agency.

"I knew they'd be very willing to help," said Vergeer. "The volunteers know transportation is a problem in these rural communities."

While some volunteers strictly wished just to transport seniors, she said most are willing to take children and youth as well.

All three said they've had positive feedback from people relying on the drivers and Mott said some clients have favourite drivers that they call and ask for.

Everything is kept confidential and volunteers receive training before taking to the roads.

Volunteers are paid for mileage and expenses such as hospital parking.

Anyone interested in enhancing the volunteer pool can contact Vergeer at the health centre.

The Chronicle

Dad focus of special event for families of young kids

Dad's role in the family is being celebrated March 3 through a special program by the West Elgin Community Health Centre's Let's Connect program.

The evening combines a number of family-focussed events, but with a special focus on fathers.

Representing Dad's Can, Gordon Fisher will be the special guest speaker, talking about the active role a father can take in raising children.

"A Celebration for Dads" is the theme of the event that is focussed on families with children up to six years old.

It will also feature a number of displays from recreation and sporting organizations across western Elgin County providing an opportunity to explore the various opportunities the community has for children and families.

In addition to the special speaker, there will also be demonstrations

and children are being asked to bring in a drawing or photo of their dad or another male adult who is an important part of their lives.

The evening is also being supported by Healthy At Heart Elgin, the Rodney and West Elgin Early Years Centres, the Dutton and West Elgin parks and recreation departments and the YWCA.

The event takes place at the West Elgin Community Health Centre from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Health centre gets \$95,000 to plan teen centre

JEFF KEMPENAAR

staff

A three-year planning process will begin at the West Elgin Community Health Centre to start a

youth drop-in centre.

The Centre received \$95,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to fund the development of a community

owned, youth organized, drop-in centre.

Claudia Mior-Eckel, program manager at the health centre helped make the application for Trillium funding and said the centre is lucky to get it.

The grant money will be used to develop a youth board of directors, develop a drop-in centre and create a community involvement plan that will see the sustainability of the centre after the

funding runs out.

Mior-Eckel said the drop-in centre will be housed in the health centre building for the first year but the directors will look to move the centre somewhere more permanent.

The teen board of directors will take on leadership of fundraising and serve community needs.

The money cannot be used to lease or purchase a permanent location, nor for the operation of the centre

when it starts.

The Trillium foundation interviewed youths from the area and found a lot of demand for a drop-in centre, said Mior-Eckel.

She said the youths were articulate, passionate and made an impression on the foundation to fund the project.

"Over the past several years our youth have been persistent in requesting a local community place to use that is safe," she said in a press release.

The Chronicle

Local artists sought to decorate WECHC

Throughout the fall and winter of 2003 our community watched as workers with hard-hats lugged concrete and created walls around what is now our new West Elgin Community Health Centre.

With the centre now built, the next task at hand is to decorate our community rooms with representations of our community's diversity.

Members of the WECHC board of directors and staff are looking for community members to gather and share ideas to help the centre come alive.

The goal is to decorate areas of the center with art that reflects the talent and culture of our

great community, including children, youth and seniors.

We invite all local artists, gallery operators and anyone with an interest in being involved with the West Elgin Community Health Centre to an Art and Cultural Community Gathering on Wednesday, Oct. 13 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. This gathering will include refreshments and a tour of the center.

Possible opportunities include rotating and permanent displays of paintings, quilts, photography, children's drawings, tapestry, as well as the creation of painted murals.

We look forward to seeing you there. Please RSVP at 768-1715.

The Chronicle

MAY 2004



OFFICIALLY OPEN

SCOTT HILGENDORFF/CHRONICLE

Local dignitaries including representatives from the Ministry of Health, MP Gar Knutson, MPP Steve Peters and West Elgin Community Health Centre board chairman Paul Mistele took part in the official ribbon cutting ceremony held at the new centre on Friday.

Community health centre officially opens

SCOTT HILGENDORFF

staff

It was a celebration of success in what all levels of government said was setting an example in health care for the rest of the province.

While open since January in its new Pioneer Line location in West Lorne, Friday marked the official opening of the new West Elgin Community Health Centre.

And while representatives of both provincial and federal levels of government pointed to how the centre is a great model for health care, West Elgin Mayor Graham Warwick took the opportunity to put a little pressure on the government to keep its funding coming and growing.

Both MP Gar Knutson and MPP and Minister of Agriculture Steve Peters praised the facility.

"We need to be sure people in rural areas have access to proper health care," said Peters, adding there should be no difference in the level of care people receive in a rural area.

He said the WECHC is a way in which rural areas can receive first-rate access to services.

On a national level, Knutson assured the more than 125 people in attendance that the government is committed to providing strong health care, improving the level of service and decreasing the waiting lists to receive care.

In his remarks, Warwick pointed out physicians are still being paid the same as they were 10 years ago when he was more closely involved as a board member and said

it's "unacceptable" that they are not better compensated.

With all the salaries coming from provincial funding, Warwick said, "Let's hope the province continues to support this facility."

Earlier, he said some people wonder why the municipality would partner in supporting the facility with the federal and provincial governments too.

He said it was a great opportunity to work with the different levels of government to help make things happen.

"This is a wonderful example of what can be done when people work together," he said, stressing the WECHC has become a model of a cost-effective form of health care that helps prevent illness and disease.

Preventative medicine has been a focus in health care of a number of years now as a way to spend money earlier to reduce greater health costs that are generated when someone does become sick.

"I am just overwhelmed by the sea of faces here and all the people who worked hard to make this happen," said Warwick.

The ceremonies were filled with praise for the success of the centre and the hard work of the staff and all the volunteers that helped see the more than \$3.5 million facility built.

"This has been truly a community effort," said Peters.

"I feel this building is a reflection of a truly wonderful community health care centre," said Joe Devlin of the Toronto Community Health Branch of the Ministry of Health.

"We at the ministry are very proud of this community health centre," he said.

WECHC Board Chairperson, Paul Mistele said the completion of the project is a huge success for the community and that it was all about people.

Without the support of the staff and community, he said ideas that created the health centre would never come to fruition.

"We're really fortunate in this community to have a health centre of this calibre," he said.

While he said there were a lot of people who helped make the project possible, he asked for a round of applause for Harry Mezenberg, a member of the original steering committee that established the WECHC and a past board member.

Words of support were also given by representatives from Elgin County Council, the Municipality of Dutton-Dunwich and Rev. Duncan Colquhoun.

MC Al McGregor reflected on days when health care was provided by a doctor travelling by horse and buggy to treat patients.

Now, he said health care has an emphasis on wellness and prevention.

"It's a marvel how far we've come," he said.

Capital Campaign Chairperson Hilde Morden said through generous donations from the community, thousands of dollars were raised locally in addition to the millions provided through federal and provincial funding.

"That gives us a vested interest in our health care," she said.

"Success is a journey, not a destination. Let's journey together in good health," said Morden.