

Musical Sounds Alarm on Child Abuse

By **ANDREW PALAMARCHUK**
Staff Writer

A Scarborough resident has created a “fun and energetic” musical play for children to address the serious issue of sexual abuse.

“This is the only show of its kind in Scarborough that addresses abuse prevention issues to very young children,” said Tricia Dutcher, founder of Kid-Safe Productions.

‘Bugs, Bubbles and Blobs’, geared towards children aged four to seven, made its premiere performance to a group of mental health professionals and a child abuse survivor Tuesday at Centenary Health Centre.

“They made recommendations that will be implemented,” said Dutcher, who also performs in the play.

Dutcher began writing the 35-minute play after working for a children’s aid society for a decade.

“I was saddened with what I saw. There’s a lot of abuse. I just wanted to do something to prevent this,” she said.

Agincourt resident Melinda Sedgemore is a child sexual abuse survivor. She said if she’d seen the play when she was a child, she would probably have confided in a teacher and the abuse would have probably stopped earlier.

“It’s important to make kids and teachers comfortable about talking about this issue. This play breaks the ice,” Sedgemore said.

“The play acknowledges that the issue exists and it reassures children that it’s OK to talk about it and they won’t get in trouble,” Sedgemore said.

Dutcher said the play is designed to introduce the topic of abuse to children. “I don’t want people to think that once their child sees this play they’re fully street proofed. It has to be accompanied by support from parents.”

Dutcher also designed a follow-up booklet for parents and teachers. “I hope children are captivated by the play and learn its vital message — awareness of child abuse prevention skills.”

Approximately one in four children are exposed to some form of unwanted sexual experience before they reach the age of 18, Dutcher said. ‘Bugs, Bubbles and Blobs’ encourages abused children to keep telling a trusted adult about abuse until they find a person who will help.



Tricia Myles Dutcher (L), Lilly the Leap Frog and Jen Radomsky present the child abuse prevention play, ‘Bugs, Bubbles and Blobs’ Tuesday at the Rouge Valley Health System-Centenary Site.

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“Dutcher said she hopes schools in the area will be interested in showing the play and is encouraging parents to contact their child’s school and make a request for the performance

“I hope the (school) board takes this play seriously and allows it to be shown in schools,” Sedgemore said. “It’s nice to see that someone is finally trying to bring this issue to the surface and help stop the cycle of abuse.”

For more information about the play, call 416.809.5437 or visit Dutcher’s Web site at www.kid-safeproductions.com