Queen's medal personal milestone

HAS VOLUNTEERED THOUSANDS OF HOURS FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS

BY WENDY ELLIOTT

The Advertiser

Karen Robinson re-Karen Robinson received a Queen's Golden Jubilee medal recently through the effort of MP Geoff Regan for her advocacy work.

Although the Halifax resident has battled Chronic Fatigue Syndrome for over a decade, she continued to volunteer thousands of hours for healthy schools.

Reached by telephone, Robinson said she was pleased to learn of the medal. "It means a lot of me and to my folks," said the Upper Dyke native. "I always wanted to be part of the solution."

Robinson has been a provincial activist as far as Barrington and Windsor and nationally through her work with Citizens for A Safe Learning Environment (CASLE).

Two-and-a-half years ago, she recalls, her greatest sense of achievement came when the provincial in the room, no air delivery system and no windows that would open.

At the time, "no one knew enough to see the problem." It wasn't all that long before the teacher went on disability leave. Robinson also saw class-

rooms that were virtually construction sites with asbestos floor tiles exposed. "I lost my innocence going to the school every day," she remembers. "My children got sprayed with pesticides at school."

Too ill to work herself,

Robinson trekked to school with her kids and saw what was happening. It wasn't long before Robinson joined with other parents to form CASLE. She accomplished her community activism in large part from her bed via telephone.



Karen Robinson



funded research projects.

Most recently Robinson is involved in the Healthy Indoors Partnership, which is a clearing house for information on indoor air quality.

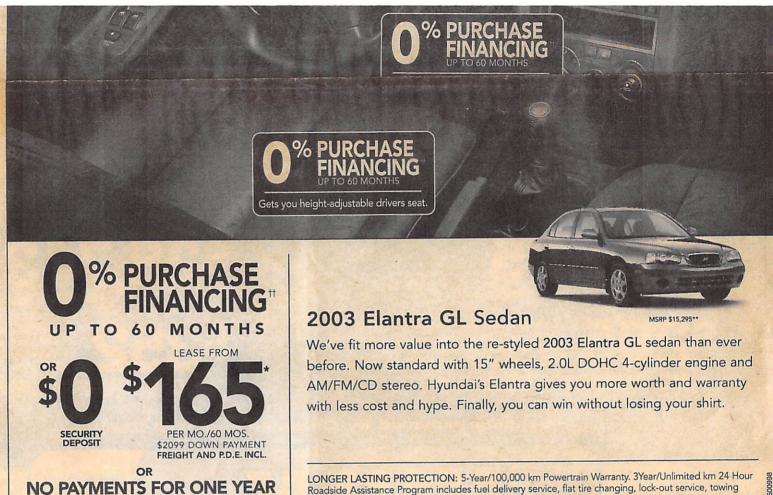
Looking back, she says that 10 years ago there was a health risk to every child attending school in Nova Scotia.

Providing information and partnering with the players at the same table, she said, made change possible. "The department of education today is truly working from the same agenda," she says.

"This is the first time I've seen this kind of longterm vision. The kids will benefit. I feel very strongly about the government, with all their flaws, taking on serious threats to the health and safety of children."

During her recently graduated son's years in elementary school, Robinson was shocked to find him learning French in a storage room. He became ill because of the toxic cleaning materials stored





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