

Ecorse High school library named after Hills resident

BY GREG MIGLIORE
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Farmington Hills resident Lydia Rizzo came to America not knowing a word of English.

She picked it up quickly, and scores of Ecorse students learned language and research skills from her in her 30 years as a librarian and teacher.

In May, the Ecorse Board of Education named the media center of its new \$23.5 million high school after her.

"I helped them in their research and reading," said Rizzo of her work with students.

Rizzo worked in Ecorse Schools from 1948-1978. She started out as an

English teacher in New York state. After working for a year in Ecorse, the school asked her to go back to college to take more classes and become its chief librarian.

"She exceeded the district's expectations," Virginia Martinez, vice president of the board said. "She raised the bar for Michigan school librarians and became an early trail blazer in selecting appropriate educational reference materials."

The library Rizzo remembers was created by remodeling the high school's girl's gymnasium.

"It was just a small library with outdated books," Rizzo said. "I developed it (library) with the help of others. The board was very generous and very sup-



Lydia Rizzo

with them." Former students were polled for the name. She was surprised with the honor 24 years after her retirement.

portive." Rizzo wanted to increase students' interest in the arts. She organized paperback books sales and used the profits to help pay for trips to see plays.

"What I missed most were the students," she said. "I enjoyed working

"They called out of the clear-blue sky," Rizzo said. "I was flabbergasted. 24 years later, I thought they'd forgotten about me."

The media center has study areas, a distant learning center, computer labs and electronic book check out.

Rizzo often spent her summers reviewing books and taking more classes in English and literature. She was president of the teachers' union for four years in the 1960s.

She is active in the Michigan Campaign for Quality Care, a group that advocated improving conditions in nursing homes. Rizzo was the coordinator of the Oakland County chapter from 1998-2001.

"She was the dynamo of the campaign," current coordinator Aldo Vagnozzi said. "She pushed hard to gain her goals."

Rizzo said she became involved because her mother was in a nursing home, and she was alarmed at the conditions.

"Most of the public doesn't know how bad it is until they have some experience with them," she said.

Rizzo enjoys writing in her spare time. She was associate editor of the Michigan Long-term Care Companion, which was published in 1998.

Forum focuses on caregiver's role in bone marrow transplants

BY PAUL R. PACE
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For the seventh year, the National Bone Marrow Transplant Link, a Southfield-based nonprofit organization, is offering a free educational forum for patients, family members and health professionals.

"Ask the experts" will be held from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, June 22, at the Livonia Civic Center Library.

Because bone marrow/stem

cell transplant may be the treatment of choice for diseases such as leukemia, lymphoma, aplastic anemia, multiple myeloma and recently some auto-immune disorders, new attention has been given to the impact BMT may have on the quality of life for patients and their caregivers.

A focus of this year's program will be the role of the caregiver. They are now recognized as a key part of the recovery team. Chris Johnson of Farmington

Hills will be among the presenters, talking about his experience being a caregiver to his first wife, who was a bone-marrow recipient in her treatment for breast cancer.

"I took care of her during and after the procedure," he said. "It's significant the amount of time involved. I was taking her vital signs and making sure she took her meds... It's a demanding role, one that at the time in 1996, I wasn't really prepared for."

Johnson, who serves on the National Bone Marrow Transplant Link board, said this seminar would have helped him better prepare for the role of caregiver.

"We will have professionals from all the health systems discussing varying aspects of the procedure," he said.

Johnson said the seminar would be especially helpful to people considering a transplant and for their families.

"These procedures are rigorous

and require a lot of caregiving and support," he said. "It's a great opportunity to learn more about it."

Myra Jacobs, executive director of the nbmtLink, said, "It is so important that caregivers are not overlooked in this process. They may need the opportunity to share ideas, successes, and practical suggestions before during and after a BMT.

Physicians, nurses, social workers and bone marrow trans-

plant survivors will be on hand to share their expertise. The video, "The New Normal: Life After Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplant," recently nominated for a regional Emmy award, will be shown during the forum. Material from related organizations will be available to attendees and CEU credits will be offered to nurses.

To register, contact nbmtLink at (800) 646-6268.

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