

Bricker Shimmer becomes ambassadors

Club dates help Easter Seals



Shimmer is (from left) Dana Gross, Johnny Robison, David James and Paul Appolonia.

By ETHEL SIMMONS

When the lounge act Shimmer was playing at the Holiday Inn in Howell last summer, many people in the audience came in wheelchairs from nearby Camp Hickory Ridge.

"They had a wonderful time," Dana Gross of Shimmer recalled. And David James, another member of the group said the camp director was impressed that Shimmer was receptive to the campers.

Hickory Ridge is the Easter Seals Camp for Handicapped Children and Adults, where both youngsters and grown-ups can spend a "barrier-free summer."

Not long afterward, Shimmer—which also includes group leader Paul Appolonia and Johnny Robison—was approached by camp director Jim Magyar with the idea of their helping the Easter Seals fund-raising campaign.

AFTER MEETINGS with Shimmer and its agent-manager Judie Horwitz of J-1 Talent in Southfield, it was agreed that the group would act as the first Easter Seal Roving Youth Ambassadors.

"The purpose was to take an established group with a middle-America image, to involve young people in the campaign," said Ms. Horwitz.

"Middle America!" said bearded Johnny Robison, with a laugh. "In high school, my nickname used to be 'freak.'"

The group was interviewed one afternoon last week around a luncheon table in the Poolside Terrace Restaurant at the Troy Hilton.

Shimmer played an engagement at Fanny's in the hotel Jan. 2-15.

Sunday night was to be their first Easter Seals Benefit Night in the Detroit area. At each club where they perform from now until April 1—date of the Easter Seals Telethon—Shimmer is devoting an entire night to raising money for the Easter Seal campaign.

WITH "BAR BUCKS," certificates to which customers can tape donations of \$1 up, Shimmer brings in the cash. Customers can include a request for a song, on a separate slip of paper, or just fill out a certificate with their bucks, which are then posted on a board.

Manager Horwitz said Tuesday that the Sunday benefit night was successful and raised several hundred dollars.

"They got an excellent response from the audience," she said.

Little Kerri Hines, who has been the Easter Seal poster child for three

years in a row, was guest of honor Sunday night.

There is no cover charge at Fanny's in the Troy Hilton, and contributions were purely voluntary. Ms. Horwitz said that at clubs that have a cover charge, the cover charge will be donated to Easter Seals on the benefit night.

Shimmer has been together since August 1976. Three members of the quartet originally worked together in the band Sounds of Karisma, a six-member group that split.

"When the group broke up, the three of us continued together and found David," Dana Gross said.

MS. GROSS, a level-headed pretty brunette, handles the tenor and soprano sax, strings and vocals with Shimmer. She is from Ann Arbor.

Group leader Paul Appolonia of Flint plays keyboard, bass and does vocals. David James, from Wapakoneta, Ohio, is featured on drums, banjo and vocals.

Johnny Robison's home is White Plains, N.Y. He plays lead guitar, congas and does vocals.

Shimmer has performed all the way up to Marquette and down in Michigan, during its 1½ years.

Branching out shortly, "We've got a couple of gigs in New Jersey, Atlanta and Illinois," Robison said.

Shimmer has written an Easter Seals campaign song for Michigan called "Reach Out," which will be heard on radio and TV spots beginning Feb. 15. The song emphasizes reaching out to touch somebody's hand, to help each other and not shut out the handicapped or disabled.

THE THEME OF the 1978 campaign is development of the handicapped person as a self-sufficient individual.

"Easter Seals has been looking for a song to use for all local and national campaigns," Ms. Horwitz said.

"Reach Out" could be it.

Money is raised for Easter Seals in each state. Michigan money is basically used for Hickory Ridge. The campaign also is devoted to aiding the detection and treatment of scoliosis, curvature of the spine, which usually begins during the ages of 9-15.

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Auditions for dinner theater performances of Neil Simon's "Plaza Suite" will be held by Janus Productions at 3 p.m. Saturday at the Sussex House, 19701 W. Twelve Mile, Southfield.

This is Janus' second production and will be presented at the Sussex House on Thursday and Friday nights starting the first weekend in March.

Members of Janus Productions are Mary Geiger, Dick and DeeDee Charlton and Fran Loud. Their first production was "Thurber Carnival," which was presented at Alvaro's in Troy.

Charles N. Campbell will direct "Plaza Suite." For further information call Frank Loud at 647-2757 during office hours.

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