

Y plans shelter for the battered woman

By SUSAN TAUBER KLEIN

There are two kinds of battered women in Oakland County. One is the woman who has money for a hotel room or has a friend's or relative's house she can go to.

The other is the battered woman who has no money or no place to go. Her only choice is to stay at her home, the place where she was battered.

The plight of this helpless woman will change sometime this year. The Pontiac-North Oakland YWCA is sponsoring a domestic violence shelter that should open during 1978.

It will serve as a boarding place for women who have been battered by their husbands and for their children. It will give them a place to stay, food to eat and clothes to wear, if necessary, while they decide what to do with their lives.

The National YWCAs adopted domestic violence as a high-priority issue in the spring of 1976. Although the organization says it isn't discriminating against battered men, it is focusing on women because it's a woman's organization.

Debi Cain has been working fulltime since Dec. 1 with another woman developing the domestic violence shelter for Oakland County. The two

women have visited other shelters and been in contact with people who work at them.

"Since every place is so different, we're able to take what we want from what we see other places have," Ms. Cain said.

ONCE OPENED, the shelter will have three bedrooms, three bathrooms, two kitchens and a living room. Women and children living there will be allowed to stay for free for 21 days—enough time to get on welfare if they need.

The women will have each other to turn to for support as well as from the person who will live at the shelter. There will be security guards at all times.

To fill spare time, the women will be able to participate in YWCA classes such as self-defense, yoga, sewing, dancing, and in the seminars taught by professionals and paraprofessionals. There will be activities for children also.

A woman can come to the shelter only after being referred from another agency. Ms. Cain said it will be the responsibility of the referring agency to give the woman legal, medical and psychological counseling.

"We won't tell the women what to

do," said Ms. Cain. "If they decide to return to their husbands or divorce them, we'll support them either way."

Several area agencies have expressed the need for a domestic violence shelter. Ms. Cain said. These agencies include the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, police departments, health agencies, Department of Social Services, and hospitals.

"THEY DON'T know what to do with battered women" Ms. Cain said.

Statistics to support the need for this type of shelter are difficult to find. One reason is because police do not keep assault cases separate from domestic violence cases. This will change if proposed Michigan legislation, House Bills 5349-5356, are passed. Police will have to keep separate statistics. The legislation will allow women to prosecute their spouses for domestic violence.

Money for the shelter is coming through the YWCA. However, help is needed.

"We've sent 200 letters to organizations asking for volunteers, canned goods, and items for the shelter," Ms. Cain said. "The public response is better than I thought it would be."

"The public doesn't understand why a battered woman stays in her situation. They think she has a choice."

"They don't realize that in most cases, because of economic and different factors, she doesn't have a choice."

Volunteers will be used to give the women emotional support by taking them to different agencies, to legal appointments and to job interviews. Volunteers are also needed to teach classes.

Donations are needed in the form of nonperishable foods, women's and

children's clothing and household items.

Anyone interested in volunteering time or items should call the YWCA at 334-0973.

The Junior Woman's Club of Berkeley is sponsoring a "Shower" for the shelter on Thursday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the Pontiac-North Oakland YWCA. Women's clubs from other areas, including Rochester, will bring dona-

tions as shower gifts.

The shelter can use any type of gift, from a television set to spatulas for the kitchen.

All of these things will ease the pain of a woman having to remove herself and her children from their home.

The pain may begin to leave even sooner for all battered women who have no place to go as soon as the domestic violence shelter opens.

Seniors plant 100 JNF trees

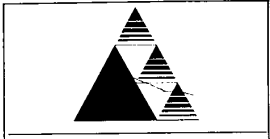
Residents of the Jewish Home for the Aged in Borman Hall in northwest Detroit and Prentiss Manor in Southfield are planting a garden of 100 trees through the Jewish National fund.

Most of the more than 300 residents contributed to the annual Tu B' Shevat (new year of the trees) project which has been going on for three years.

A life-size paper-mache tree was fashioned and placed in the lobby of

Borman Hall and each time a tree was purchased, a leaf was added.

"It was an enjoyable thing to watch the tree grow," said Cheryl Riskin, activities director. "This tree project is one of the meaningful activities carried on at the Home for the Aged. The residents look forward to it. They feel they are aiding a cause they have loved all their lives—the support of Israel."



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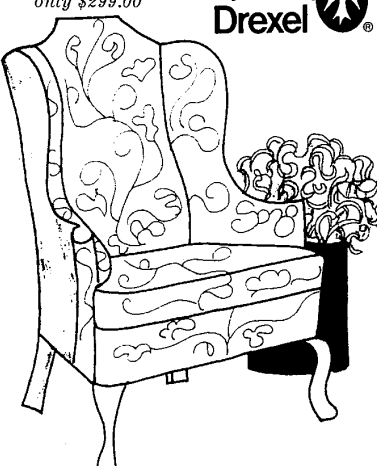
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