1979: International Year of the Child

Designated the International Year of the Child (IYC), 1979 will begin a 12 month period of concentration on the special needs of children. But in Mich-igan, a committee formed by a South-field homemaker has already been at work for more than a year.

field homemaker has already been at work for more than a year. Diana Thottungal formed Citizens for the International Year of the Child to define short and long term needs of children and parents and translate them into workable programs. Her group includes child care professionals and parapprofessionals working with the parents?

and 'paraprofessionals working with the parents. The goals of the IVC, as defined by the United Nations agency, UNICEF, are to heighten awareness of chidren's special needs among decision makers and the public, to mobilize support for existing child-oriented programs and to spur specific, practical measures with activeable goals to benefit children in the short and long term.

When Mrs. Thothungal learned in September, 1977 that 1979 was going to be the International Year of the Child, she decided she must act to assure that parents and children would take full advantage of the opportunities of

THOUGH she is herself a layman in he field of child care, Mrs. Thottungal as done graduate work in human gen-tics and taught at City College in New



DIANA THOTTUNGAL

She has three children ages 7, H and 16 and has always been active in PTO groups in her children's schools. She was a member of Southfield's Citizen Advisory Task Force on declining errollment.

"I feel that parenting skills have too often been undervalued and that's a primary reason withy many women ont fund it fulfilling to be at home raising their kids, "she said.
She contends that parents have abandoned many aspects of parenting outsiders.
"I would like parents to regain a serse of total responsibility for the child's well-being, a sense of con-

fidence and effectiveness when it comes to child-rearing."

According to Mrs. Thottungal, the cilizans group does not itself sponsor child-oriented activities, but rather it seeks out groups and individuals with expertise in these areas and encourages them to act.

one of the ways that parents can gain confidence in their recreating skills is by having information usey need made available to them by child

need made available to them by child care professionals. Equally important, they need a chance to express their own needs and talk about what kinds of child care services would be most helpful to them. Programs planned by Gitzens for IYC in coordination with profes-sional groups and individuals will pro-vide a forum.

MONTHLY subject themes on which conferences, workshops and other projects will be based have been desig-nated including birth and infacy, the child in the family, violence and the child, children's culture, and focus on

child in the family, violence and tre-child, children's culture, and focus on adolescence.

Within this broad framework, some of the most pressing problems facing parents and their children will be explored: Child abuse, special needs of single parents, probelens of families with handicapped children and other. Programs will fall into several cate-gories: those having immediate direct impact on children and adults with responsibility for their care (parents backers, counselors and daid care-teachers, counselors and daid care-teachers, counselors and daid care-teachers, counselors and daid care-teachers, counselors and children in the communications department of South-filled's Bendix Corporation, is coor-dinator to carry out the them "Busi-ness and Industry and the Child."

"We are trying to make business and industry aware of the special meeds of working parents in relation to finding quality child care for their children when they are at work," she said.

"The difficulties these employees face in this area have a direct impact on their performance on the job. We hope that business and industry will recognize these problems and respond with plans for on-site child care centers, and flex time."
Sharon Wilkerson, a doctoral student in the College of Nursing at Wayne Sate University, has been involved as well.

HER AREA of involvement is to plan a conference on health and medical care to be sponsored by the Maternal-Child Health Department of the College of Nursing at WSU. The event is planned for the spring of 1979 and will deal with the effects of illness on children and their families.

"The conference will focus not only on the child who is ill, but on the entire family, including other siblings who are often overhooked in the family's stempt to cope with the sick child," she said.

"Members of the nursing profession as well as parents who have had to handle this situation will take part in the conference," said Mrs. Wilkerson. According to Mrs. Thottungal, the approach of her group will be two-

approach of her group will be two-pronged.
"First, we try to find out what par-erts and kids really need and then we approach child care professionals to set them to help develop projects dealing with these needs," she said. been sponsored by Childres ("Out near of the courts of Michigan, Inc., the American Academy of Pediatrics, Wayne State University and others.

"Although we can't build the parks or design hospital birthing room," she said. "we are finding the people who can and persuading them to work on these projects during the International Year of the Child." For more information about Citizens for IYC call Mrs. Thottungal at 33: 319 of Judy Schmidt at 477-513.

'I would like parents to regain a sense of total respon-sibility for the child's wellbeing, a sense of confidence and effectiveness when it comes to child-rearing.

- Diane Thottungal

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2 Self-management clinics help smokers and the overweight

A smoking withdrawal and weight control clinic has been put together by Larry Gettelman, who zeros in on self-management to help persons bring about change without strain.

The first of his course in two parts is set for 7:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 12, the YMCA_2010 Farmington Road.

Gettelman is a Certified Public Accountant with Ford Motor Company and a certified physical fitness instructor for the Y.

He is also a reformed two-and-ahl-pack-ad-ay smoker who lost 50 pounds after putting into some techniques he devised.

"It's absolutely amazing," he said, "it's absolutely amazing," he said without being come to the proposed of the says. "armed with usable knowledge can change our entire lives, from hard work to play."

His introductory lecture is without charge or obligation.

He believes his devices are fun ways



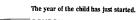
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