

Seniors helping seniors

Emergency fund created for home-bound meals

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

Senior citizens are helping their own these days by selling raffle tickets to provide meals that must be brought to those confined in their homes.

A few weeks ago regulars at The Gathering Place, Farmington's senior citizen center, referred to the project as "our Afghan raffle."

Now it is simply called "the raffle," because another dozen senior adults have added items that range from home-made preserves to hand-crafted rugs. They hope to make enough money to bring meals to seniors not provided for through OLHSA (Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency).

The agency, through its Nutrition Council, has enough money to provide 2,100 meals a day in the two counties to those over the age of 60. Of this number, no more than 15 percent can be home-delivered.

With calls coming to The Gathering Place for this service, there is always a waiting list.

LORETTA CONWAY, director of senior adult activities, concedes to the term "waiting list" in theory but not in fact.

"No one has ever gone hungry if we know about it," she said.

Maggie Loidas, senior adult specialist in The Gathering Place, adds: "If we can't do something for them here, we tie them into another agency and follow that case right down to the bottom line. We don't let up on the follow-up until we know that person has been taken care of."

"We don't close shop here at 5 p.m.," says Mrs. Conway. "We never walk away from a call. We stand there until someone takes over. Or, if a meal can't be delivered for some reason, we must know why."

Emergencies have included a retarded person left alone, finding someone suffering from stroke, again alone, who was eventually aided by the staff or the

volunteers; a staff member's run to MacDonalds for an emergency hamburger; and a wait in a hospital hall until a relative showed up.

"This is nobody's job," Mrs. Loidas said. "We just do it."

MONEY IS NEEDED for these emergencies. But some of the frustration for the staff and volunteers may be abated through a change in one of OLHSA's restrictions after the Nutrition Council's suggestion was passed recently by the Area Council on Aging.

The Nutrition Council, comprised of volunteers from each of the nutrition sites in the two counties, asked that monies allowed the two counties by the federal government be supplemented with outside donations.

Prior to a few weeks ago, that was not allowed. Additional meals beyond the number allotted for each nutrition site simply could not be ordered.

The first thing that happened in The Gathering Place when the ban was lifted was "Paddy's Piling," a dinner dance for the cost of \$1 that started the emergency home-bound meal pot.

Next word got through to Edwin Wasack, who heads up the civic affairs committee for Farmington Moose Lodge 1995, which gave Ms. Conway a check for \$225. That money was made by selling hard boiled eggs the lodge members order with their beer.

Brownies from Troop 741, who meet in Larkshire Elementary School, dipped into their funds for a contribution of \$12.

THE GOAL is \$1,000 for the year, predicated on past experience of need and a prediction of an increased number on the waiting list.

Staff members suspect the sagging economy is one reason behind the increase. Another reason is that more people who have gone without are now aware that the service is available, a

situation familiar in nutrition sites throughout the state.

Agnes Erwin is prognosticator for ordering the meals, prepared in Mercy Center's kitchen and delivered to the home-bound by about 40 volunteers.

Mrs. Loidas called the volunteers "the unsung heroes of the program. They are here every noon, pay for their gas themselves and don't leave until the last tray has gone," she said.

Mrs. Erwin orders about 700 meals a day but determines this number, varying never more than 100 in each direction, depending on the program planned for the day.

"Fridays the number is always high, because it's party day here when the senior adult band plays. I just have a good feel for how many people are going to show up for a speaker, a program, a class," she said.

Senior adults may pay for their noon meal if they choose to do so with "a self-determined donation," she said.

THE DONATION from the Moose provides one person one meal each day for a year, though many of the recipients need meals brought to them for short terms only.

"The list is constantly changing," Mrs. Conway said. "People get sick and they get better, or they move or go to nursing homes. But if we had money for four extra persons a year, I think we'd be in fairly good shape. That's why the goal is \$1,000."

May will be observed as Senior Adult Month, so regulars at The Gathering Place slated their raffle to be drawn on the day of their annual spring Arts and Crafts Show, set for May 25.

The show and sale displays the works the seniors have created throughout the year.

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Craft classes in The Gathering Place are led by Yvonne Singer.

Art classes are led by members of Farmington Art Foundation.



At right, Leola Rammel and Mary Marshall act as volunteers to serve the noon meal in The Gathering Place. Meanwhile, other volunteers are out delivering meals to those confined in their homes. Be-

cause restrictions on the federal funding have been lifted, this job will be a little easier for the staff and volunteers. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Bands, choruses out in force to herald Music Week

"Music is a natural expression of the inner man, a natural means of communication."

— Joyce Schack — Farmington Musicale

LORRAINE MCCLISH

Southfield's Tel-Twelve Mall sets the stage for area musicians who will participate in the week-long observance of National Music Week, sponsored here by members of Farmington Musicale and Birmingham Musicale Sunday through Sunday, May 4-11.

The two groups join sister clubs throughout the nation in observance of the 57th such event initiated by the National Federation of Music Clubs.

"We do this because the earliest historical records prove that there has always been some form of music," said Joyce Schack, of Farmington Musicale.

"Music is a natural expression of the inner man, a natural means of communication."

"Music exerts a strong influence in every life. We may use it to deepen our worship, to express patriotic fervor, as a calming effect, to add joyous atmosphere to happy occasions."

Birmingham's "Summer in the Park" series.

Jazz is the forte of the West Bloomfield High School Stage Band, who take the stage at 1 p.m. Thursday. The group is under the direction of Gerald Jacby and specializes in all phases of jazz.

"There is no limit to the use and application of music in our every day lives."

Theme for the year is "Music: A Means of Understanding and Enrichment," carried out by jazz bands, dixieland bands, community bands, mixed choruses and barbershop groups, in the series of week-long free concerts.

FOLLOWING tradition, Paul Barber directs the Farmington Community Jazz Band to open the festivities at 3 p.m. Sunday.

The Bloomfield Hills Junior High School Advance Orchestra, under the direction of Kathy Grittith, takes the podium at 1 p.m. Monday. The 18-member orchestra will play Brandenburg Concerto 3.

Monday evening's entertainment, set to begin at 7:30 p.m., comes from the Marian-Rice Singers of Birmingham. Sister Maria Magri leads four groups who will perform.

At 1 p.m. Tuesday, the spotlight falls on the Shawassee Strutters, made up of nine Farmington High School students, who give a colorful program of Dixieland and blues music.

At 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, the Wolverine Barbershop Chorus takes center stage with songs in concert as well as from the choruses quartettes.

BIRMINGHAM Musicale's chorus furnishes the program for 1 p.m. Wednesday. Hazel Lawrence directs the 30 women for a concert of numbers from "Annie."

The Birmingham Community Band, organized three years ago, are on the bill for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday under the direction of Donald Hillman. This group is one of the regulars during Bir-

"The Sherryettes," from Sheryl's School of Dance, furnish the entertainment at 7:30 p.m. Thursday with jazz and tap numbers, mostly to "Annie" music.

At 1 p.m. Friday, Eugene Hanson strikes up the 90-piece wind and percussion band from Groves High School for a concert, then to accompany performances by the school's majorettes.

Farmington Musicale members call the 7:30 p.m. Friday performance "a must." Detroit Country Day School stages a "Mighty Mini Musical" with songs from "Damn Yankees." Paul Donohoe directs the 25 talented students.

At 1 p.m. Friday the Novi Choralaires salute National Music Week, when Janet Wasilak directs the 30 mixed voices.

The Northville Community Band wind up the concerts at 3 p.m. Saturday. Bob Williams directs the 62-member symphonic band made up of adults and students.

"ARTISTS contribute to the observance in the way of an art display that will run continuously in the mall throughout the week."

All of the art comes from Birmingham and Farmington Public Schools.

The works to be shown were created specifically for the week by the area students with a musical theme.

"Whether you are a professional, amateur, student, or a listener," Ms. Schack said, "get involved and increase your own enjoyment of music."

"As we observe this annual event, let us all recognize the power of music at all age levels. Support the efforts of musicians in your church, school and community."



The Shawassee Strutters, led by clarinetist Dan Lochrie, take the stage at 1 p.m. Tuesday to add a session of Dixieland for National Music Week. The Farmington High School teens are Alex Dueto, at left, and in back from left, Lochrie, P.J. Slack, Karen Miele and Car-

lene Smith. In front, Tim Kolbasa, David Runyan, John Brubaker and Todd Knickerbocker. The talented group is having a busy spring with a schedule of about one performance a week. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)