

Home's goal is independence for its retarded residents

The brick ranch home on Farmington Road and Freedom looks like any other house in the area which hosts a mix of single family residences and apartments.

But beyond the well-kept lawn and modest patio of the new ranch house is a community of 12 men and women helping each other live in a world that moves a faster than they do.

The house is the ninth home in a series of Community Living Centers. The CLC, headed by Mary Wagner of Farmington, runs another home for mentally retarded residents on Tuck in Farmington Hills as well as homes in Southfield, Birmingham, Hazel Park, Royal Oak, Clawson and Pontiac.

Inside the home, Sister Shirley Ruder and her sister, Rose Marie Maze, man-

age the house with a combination of humor and determination.

They are helped by the home's neighbors. One woman stopped by to volunteer her sewing skills to the home. Now, she helps residents mend their clothing once a week.

Each of the residents has lived in another home before moving to this one. With each home, they've progressed to more self-reliance and less supervision. Ideally, they will be able someday to handle apartment living with another CLC graduate.

While the home on Tuck has organized activities for its residents, the Farmington Road home's residents are encouraged to use community resources on their own, according to Sister Ruder.

"THERE ARE MORE privileges, more going out into the community. They're not as closely supervised," she said.

"We're encouraging them to use community resources, shopping centers, the library, the show and money skills. They're not real sharp on it. We teach them to count their change and know how much they're giving the cashier. We try to teach them the value of things."

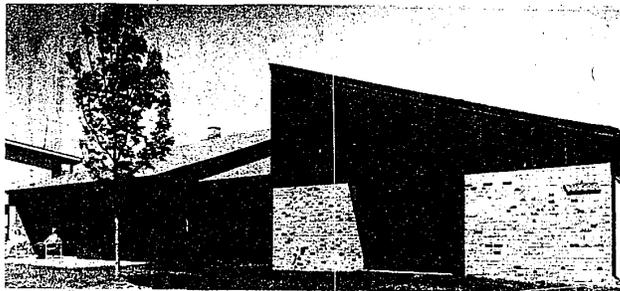
Residents are encouraged to participate in organized sports such as bowling and baseball leagues as well as swimming at the YMCA. They're encouraged to use the city park and theater.

Bowling trophies grace some of the shelves of the residents' bedrooms. The women have sunny yellow suites with matching white and yellow furniture. Against brown ginger jar accent lamps are propped up family photos of smiling relatives.

The men's rooms are done in blue and brown with darker furniture in the same modern style as the women's. Cigarette cartons, baseball caps and more family photos keep the rooms from looking like carbon copies of each other.

Each room is regimentally neat. Keeping organized is part of the program.

Next week, the residents will begin doing their own laundry. Gradually they'll learn to cook in the country-



The house on Farmington Road is part of Community Living Center's program to encourage mentally retarded residents to gain some independence. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

style kitchen which is dominated by stainless steel sinks and counter space.

MOST OF THE RESIDENTS work in the community. Three work in a New Horizons sheltered workshop. The others hold down jobs at area restaurants, department stores and nursing homes.

Their jobs range from checking the customers' bags as they enter a store to housekeeping duties at nursing homes.

Sister Ruder began her tenure with Ms. Wagner's houses several years ago when she was looking for a job in the medical field. She is a licensed practical nurse, teacher and administrator.

Ms. Wagner hired her as a medical coordinator for the Tuck residence. When the house manager moved on, Sister Ruder, a member of the Adrian Dominican center, took that post.

Math whiz wins award

Paul Williams, 23025 Warner, Farmington, has been awarded the Albert E. Lampen Mathematics Prize by Hope College where he was a recent graduate.

This prize was established by friends and students of the late Professor Lampen, who served as head of the department of mathematics for 39 years.

The award is made to a mathematics major of the senior class who has studied mathematics in depth and breadth, has maintained a high average and shows promise of success in the field.



In the kitchen of the new home, house manager Sister Shirley Ruder helps prepare dinner. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)



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