

# Panel to discuss alcohol abuse

started using pot and booze when I was 11. By my 16th birthday, I had tried to kill myself, and I knew I had a serious drinking problem. By 17, the world was closing in on me."

These are the words of a 22-year-old recovering alcoholic named Kathy. In talks in West Bloomfield and Grosse Pointe, her stories have prompted tears and applause from the audience.

On Tuesday at Schoolcraft College, she will join five other panelists to discuss "alcohol abuse in the family and community."

On Tuesday, May 25, Kathy will join five other panel members for a seminar on "alcohol abuse in the family and the community" scheduled for the convenience of residents in the Livonia, Northville, Farmington and Plymouth communities.

The seminar will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Schoolcraft College's Waterman Center, 18600 Haggerty between Six and Seven Mile roads. Anyone may attend free.

THE THIRD in a series, the seminar was begun by Maplegrove (Henry Ford Hospital's non-profit center for the treatment of alcoholism and chemical dependency) and the Junior League of Birmingham. Co-sponsoring organizations include: Farmington Youth Assistance, Farmington Area Advisory Council, Growth Works of Plymouth, Livonia PTA Council, Livonia Youth Assistance, Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, Plymouth Family Service and Women's Resource Center of Schoolcraft College.

Information on the seminar is available from Maplegrove, 661-6100.

Speakers will include a recovering alcoholic who is a Livonia probation officer, another who has been alcoholic for 10 years, Richard Morris, M.D., a consultant to Maplegrove and former medical co-director of Brighton Hospital, Jeanne Knopf DeRoche, family therapist, Maplegrove, and Sila Wenger, co-founder of the Maplegrove Junior League of Birmingham alcohol awareness community education project.

MIKE WHORF of WJR-Radio's "Kaleidoscope" will moderate. Whorf will field questions from the audience for the second hour of the program.

"We see an increasing use of alcohol by adolescents now as compared with the early 1970s," said Jane Reiser Williams of the Farmington Area Advisory Council.

As education director for the council, Williams has taken alcohol education to 2,000 Farmington area youth through classroom presentations during the past year.

She sees the May 25 seminar as another step in heightening awareness of alcoholism.

"You have to be aware of the problem to identify it, and you have to identify it to start getting help for it," Williams said.

"I think if you give them enough good education, even if they're already involved, they can make the decision to get off drugs and alcohol," said seminar panel member Wayne Templeton. He refers to the 17-25-year-olds with

whom he works as probation officer for the 16th District Court, Templeton coordinates a youth substance abuse program two nights a week. Education, he said, helps probationers get in touch with their "real true feelings," he said. "They haven't developed their coping mechanisms, because they have used drugs and alcohol instead of coping."

"WE'RE DEVOTED to making Plymouth a healthy community to live and work in," said Chamber of Commerce executive board member Betty Stremich. Owner of the Hillside Inn, Stremich feels that "the food service industry also has a commitment to understanding alcoholism."

"Since I've been made aware of the extent of the problem of alcoholism, I've realized how important it is for a restaurant to serve acceptable substitutes for alcoholic beverages. Sparkling Catawba makes as good a toast as champagne and a pina colada can taste

good without liquor," she said. The May 25 seminar is part of a long-term commitment to community education by Maplegrove which also includes a joint alcohol awareness project with the Junior League of Birmingham. Through that project 38 volunteers are now trained to take information on alcohol abuse and alcoholism to school and community groups throughout the Detroit metropolitan area.

Maplegrove has a family treatment program which is unique in Michigan in its requirement that family members of a patient participate in some 40 hours of treatment while the patient is in the program. Because Maplegrove staff members work with entire families on a day-to-day basis, they are particularly aware of the need for education and of the types of information which can be most useful in dealing with alcoholism and alcohol abuse.

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