

Thursday, July 7, 1983 O&E

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Kid's Day Calendar of Events

Eight hours of activities planned just for kids will run from noon to 8 p.m. Saturday in every corner of Farmington City Park, on Shlawassee between Power and Farmington Road.

Activities will spill over to across the street on the grounds of Our Lady of Sorrows School.

The annual Kid's Day has been organized by representatives of Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department, Farmington Community Center and Farmington Community Library.

The organizing committee worked with Adults for Kids, Farmington Area Pre-School Council, Farmington YMCA, Farmington Youth Assistance and 50 local merchants to make up the following agenda:

ALL DAY

HOT DOG ROAST and all food concessions staffed by Farmington Area Jaycees and Jayettes to help pay some of the costs for activities that are offered without charge.

PONY RIDES, sponsored by Scott Colburn Western Store.

CLOWNS, ART-IN TENT, sponsored by Michigan Council for the Arts, Farmington Area Arts Commission and Buggy Works Restaurant. Staffing and organization contributed by Farmington Area Pre-School Council.

HELIUM BALLOON MESSAGE LAUNCH, sponsored by Farmington Observer.

SPORT MOBILE, sponsored by Hoosier Restaurants.

MOONWALKS, FACE-PAINTING TENT, contributed and staffed by Women of North Farmington.

NATURE DISCOVERY MOBILE, sponsored by Farmington Naturalists and Farmington Education Association.

STORYTELLING TENT, operated by the staff of Farmington Community Library.

KIDDIE RIDES, PETTING ZOO, brought by Farmington Hills Junior Women's Club.

DUNK TANK, brought by Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department.

VIDEO GAMES come from the Great Getaway Family Arcade and Coney.

CHALKMASTER, brought by Adults for Kids, in cooperation with Burger King of Farmington Hills.

ON THE STAGEMOBILE

Noon: Farmington Gymnastic Center

1 p.m.: Professor Bozo

2 p.m.: Carmody the Magician

3 p.m.: The Puppet Twins

4 p.m.: Gerry the Fool

5 p.m.: Crabgrass Treadwell

6:30 p.m.: Carmody the Magician

7:30 p.m.: The Farmington Community Band.

All professional entertainers on the Stagemobile are sponsored by Domino's Pizzeria, Pediatric Associates of Farmington PC, and Papa Romano's.

FUN AND SKILL CONTESTS

1 p.m.: Water balloon toss

2 p.m.: Shoe scramble

3:30 p.m.: Candy toss

4:30 p.m.: Balloon pass

5:30 p.m.: Frisbee toss

These contests will be run by Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department and Farmington YMCA personnel. Prizes are given by Contemporary Awards and the Farmington Education Association.

1:30 p.m.: Rotten sneaker contest sponsored by Gabe Shoes, who will give gift certificates to the three kids with the rottenest pair of sneakers. Kids will be called back for the finals at 2:45 p.m.

OTHER GOOD STUFF

THE TALKING ROBOT, from World of Robots, comes to the park at 1 p.m. and remains through 5 p.m.

THE FARMINGTON YMCA pool on Farmington Road north of 18 Mile opens for free swimming 1-4 p.m.

VICTORIA NAJJAR-TEICHER, children's author and poet, will tell children poems in the storytelling tent at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

HOT AIR BALLOON LIFT OFF between 5-8 p.m. if weather permits.

ON AND OFF

McGRUFF THE CRIME DOG makes appearances with Farmington Hills and Farmington Police Department members, who also staff display booths and give demonstrations.

APPEARANCES by members of the

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At Providence Hospital

Genetic counselors fight birth defects

By Carol Aizlian
staff writer

The statistics are alarming: Three to 5 percent of all infants (one out of every 20 to 30 babies) born in this country will suffer from birth defects.

With increased exposure to harmful chemicals, drugs and radiation, pregnant women face dangers that previously remained undetected.

In the past, the only recourse for pregnant women concerned about genetic disorders or birth defects was to consult doctors who offered limited and speculative medical advice but little consolation.

Recognizing the need for more in-depth genetic counseling and education services, Providence Hospital in Southfield recently joined a growing list of medical facilities providing those services.

"We must be up-to-date in this area," said Dr. Don Krohn, chairman of Providence's obstetrics and gynecology department.

"The risk to pregnant women from exposure to potentially harmful agents such as chemicals, radiation, alcohol, medication and so on has never been greater."

PATIENTS and professional staff at the Southfield hospital continually are kept informed about the latest scientific data on genetic disorders, birth defects and teratogens (chemicals, drugs that cause fetal abnormalities).

The man chiefly responsible for disseminating that information is Dr. Lester Weiss, director of Henry Ford Hospital's Medical Genetics and Birth Defects Center.

"Several years ago we realized that even though genetic counseling services were available, people weren't receiving them," Weiss said. "The medical centers were in cities too far away for most people to travel to."

"Doctors weren't always aware of the availability and need of the services."

That's why Weiss set up the center at Ford Hospital 16 years ago. Since then, he's been spreading the news to hospitals throughout the state.

The results are promising. Major medical centers at Wayne State University, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University have joined with public health departments, clinics and hospitals in outside areas to form a statewide genetics counseling network.

Doctors involved in the statewide effort tackle tough questions about the adverse effects of Bendectin, the only U.S. drug approved for morning sickness, PBB and dioxin contamination, and genetic diseases.



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Dr. Lester Weiss regularly counsels parents about the risks of birth defects. Weiss, director of Henry Ford Hospital's Medical Genetics

and Birth Defects Center, now offers his services at Providence Hospital in Southfield.

FOR EXAMPLE, after Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals Inc. halted production of Bendectin, Detroit-area mothers turned to Henry Ford's Birth Defects Center for answers.

"We've been getting many calls," Weiss said. "We tell them there is no firm scientific evidence that Bendectin causes birth defects. I really don't think it does."

Cincinnati-based Merrell Dow, a division of Dow Chemical Co. of Midland, also claims there is no scientific evidence that Bendectin is associated with

an increase in risks of birth defects.

The company has been the target of hundreds of lawsuits alleging the drug causes deformities in fetuses. Recently, a District of Columbia Superior Court jury awarded \$750,000 compensatory damages to the family of a 12-year-old Maryland girl who was born with a deformed hand.

In 27 years, the drug has been prescribed to more than 33 million women around the world. But its use has dropped in recent years because of negative publicity.

When the PBB controversy surfaced, physicians involved in genetic counseling teamed up with public health officials to administer tests measuring PBB contamination levels.

"For most people, the levels were quite low," Weiss said. "And there was no evidence that it caused birth defects. But if we (detected) PBB in the mother's milk, we suggested that she avoid nursing her babies."

Although fears about PBB contamination have subsided, anxiety over newly discovered toxins such as dioxin lingers.

National Cancer Institute studies have shown that dioxin causes birth defects in mice. Even though there is no concrete scientific evidence indicating that dioxin causes birth defects in human beings, some groups have filed lawsuits claiming that it does.

More than 70,000 Vietnam veterans, their widows and children sued Dow and several other chemical companies. The suit alleges that the millions of pounds of Agent Orange (which contains dioxin) dumped on Vietnam from 1961 to 1971 caused some of the cancers, deformities in children and other serious health effects experienced by veterans.

BUT WEISS contends that doctors and scientists "don't have any good information on dioxin."

"We try to put these things in some perspective for our patients by telling them that if it there were a large increase in birth defects as in the case of thalidomide, we'd know about it," he said.

Weiss advises his patients to avoid alcohol, medication — unless it's absolutely necessary — and smoking during pregnancy.

Besides chemical pollutants and drugs, there are many other causes of birth defects.

Genetic disorders include spina bifida (open spine disease), Tay-Sachs (common among Central European Jews), sickle cell anemia (prevalent among blacks), Duchenne's muscular dystrophy and Hemophilia.

"Depending on the circumstances, we can tell parents the risks involved," Weiss said. "Usually it turns out to be much lower than they were afraid of."

"For example, if the mother or father's sister has spina bifida, there's a 1 percent chance that the newborn will have the disease."

"In counseling, it's important how you phrase this. You can also tell the parents, there's a 99 percent chance that their baby won't be born with spina bifida."

If both parents are carriers of Tay-Sachs — a debilitating disease that takes the lives of infants — the odds are one in four that the newborn will

suffer from the disease, Weiss said.

"We can test for this. And, we can review options with the parents. They may decide not to have children because the risks are too high, adopt, use artificial insemination or take their chances."

"We're much more aware of what causes birth defects and the preventive measures than we used to be," Weiss said. "But parents must seek counseling before they have a baby so we can try to reduce the risks."

Do you qualify for genetic counseling?

Genetic counseling services are available at Providence Hospital in Southfield. Here's who should seek advice on risks for birth defects:

- Parents of children with a birth defect or genetic disorder.
- Other relatives concerned about the risk of having a child with a similar defect.

- Members of ethnic groups who may risk being carriers of genetic disorders: Central European Jews — Tay-Sachs disease; blacks — sickle cell anemia; persons of Mediterranean descent — Thalassemia.

- Pregnant women ages 35 and older.
- Fathers ages 15 or older.
- Pregnant women exposed to

chemicals, radiation, potentially harmful drugs.

- Persons with infertility problems.
- Persons with malignancies (when the disease is common or widespread in the family).

- Individuals and families with a history of mental retardation or illness.
- Families with a history of hemophilia.

- Families with a history of Duchenne's muscular dystrophy.
- Families with a history of kidney diseases.

- Parents with children who suffer from hydrocephalus or dwarfism.
- Women who had multiple miscarriages.

Softball tournament has story book finish

Bethlehem Lutheran Church's softball team ended the season in third place, a cause for rejoicing among the ball players — they finished last in 1982's play.

"A story book finish couldn't have been better," said team member Bill Krueger. The tournament was for those in the local district of Michigan Synod, Lutheran Church of America.

"It's the bottom of the seventh. The score is tied. Bases are loaded, and there are two out. Dave Wiljason is at bat. There is a full count. The pitch is a high looper and on the inside," Krueger said.

"Wiljason connects for a single, driving in John Wertman, winning the

game 7-4 over Shepherd of the Lakes, in Walled Lake."

Ball players who attend Bethlehem Lutheran Church, at 35300 Eight Mile in Farmington Hills, make up one of the six teams that come from six parishes in the district.

All proceeds from this year's tournament will be used for World Hunger.

As ballplayers were bowing to winners from Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Brighton, team manager Bob Gedeon was congratulating his players on their strong recovery from last year's showing.

"We were playing in near-record temperatures," Gedeon said. "Our third place win reflects our maturity."



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Doctors and other staff members at Providence Hospital take a lesson on the latest data on the causes of birth defects from Dr. Lester Weiss, an expert in the field.