

Creative problem solving: A tool for our time

By Lorraine McLish
staff writer

Natalie Halpern launches her creative problem-solving classes this fall simultaneously with a search for metropolitan area alumni of the Creative Problem Solving Institute in Buffalo, N.Y.

With anywhere from 500-700 persons attending the institute for any of its workshops, seminars or programs every year, some of those people have got to be from this area," she said.

Halpern's hope is to form a network of creative problem solvers for community service, for profit, just for the enjoyment of it, or for the re-enforcement of their own skills.

She has been attending the institute for the past five summers, bringing back the new research and the ideas that come from new exploration to put into her classes here every fall.

Most recently she's begun work on a master's program there because she is

convinced that knowing how to solve problems creatively "is the most important tool one can have for our time," she said.

"With high-tech going at the rate it's going and so drastically affecting all of our life styles, knowing how to change and adapt with a bit of creativity might mean survival."

"When you become a creative problem solver you become an effective decision maker. Creative thinking, particularly dealing with change and innovation is a skill which can be learned, developed, improved."

THE WEST Bloomfield resident has worked as a newspaper reporter, a public relations specialist, a freelance writer and a market researcher.

Since her attention has turned to creative problem solving, which incidentally includes stress management, she has concentrated on training, teaching and lecturing in that field throughout southern Michigan.

Her seven-week course for those in this area runs 7-9 p.m. Thursdays beginning Sept. 15 on Orchard Ridge Campus, Oakland Community College, and is listed in the college brochure as "Creative Thinking Strategies."

"Every fall the course changes with the new input I get from the institute," Halpern said. "But the basics are still the same: learning the creative-solving process and learning how to apply it to generate and implement ideas which are new, valuable and relevant to your career or personal life."

"All of the routine tasks can be assigned to the computers now. With that time freed up we can deal with new situations in a more creative manner."

THE CREATIVE Problem Solving Institute stems from the work of advising executive Alec Osborn who devised the method for, and coined the word "brainstorming." Soon after that came the innovation of the "think-tank."

The first methods used for both

brainstorming and the think-tank demanded a group of people to come up with a solution for a specific problem.

"There is an advantage with a group, using the collective brain power of those at hand, plugging ideas, bouncing off ideas from someone else's thought, no doubt about that. I've been in sessions where you could actually feel the energy level rising," she said.

"But brainstorming can be done alone. These are the methods I teach in my classes," she said.

"And this skill is not confined to the gifted or the talented or the artists of the world. This is for all people everywhere who just want to stretch the imagination they already have for optimum results."

Registration for Halpern's fall class is taken by calling the school's Education and Student Services, 471-7551.

Creative Problem Solving Institute alumni who are interested in learning Halpern's ideas for creating a problem solving network are invited to call her at 851-2271.

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— Natalie Halpern



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Frail elderly find shelter in day care center

By Joanna Whitaker
staff writer

BID MORSE, 90, frequently talks about returning to her native Tipperary. But, when the fragile, white-haired woman says that she wants to go home to Ireland to die, the friends that she is making at "Sheltering Arms" say that the trip would be much more fun made on the arm of a handsome gentleman.

Morse is the first person enrolled in a recently opened adult day care facility for people over 60 who are in need of constant care but not so ill that they have to be institutionalized.

Sponsored by Catholic Social Services of Oakland County, the program is supposed to help keep people from being institutionalized needlessly by providing a place where the frail elderly are offered stimulating activity, health monitoring, occupational therapy and conversation five days of the week.

The center will open officially with an open house on Tuesday, Sept. 27, but it began servicing clients in early August. It is expected to become a model for many more such facilities because of an anticipated explosion of the elderly population in the next several years.

STATISTICS SUGGEST that the number of elderly in the Birmingham area will reach 70,000 by 1990, and double the current 45,000 by the year 2,000.

Said program director John Keeler, "The most important questions we get from families such as Bid's, even before how much it will cost, are, 'Am I too late to enroll?' and 'Are there any spaces left?'"

The aptly named day-care facility occupies four rooms in Birmingham's former Torrey Elementary School which was bought recently by Our Shepherd Lutheran School. Since reopening, it will be the site for activities ranging from the adult day-care facility to a preschool program and adult community programs.

Keeler sees the combination of activities as an ideal arrangement for his clients who will benefit from the activity going on around them. He is most excited at the prospect of bringing together the elderly and the enthusiastic preschoolers.

"We're going to have 80-year-olds and 4-year-olds in the same building," he said with obvious pleasure. "Neither group is in that hectic age group, so

they can interact and share things together. The children haven't developed any biases yet toward old age. Those over 70 no longer have to prove themselves to anyone."

SHELTERING ARMS, said Keeler, is open to any senior citizen from the local community or from wherever there is someone willing to transport them to 1658 E. Lincoln. When they get there they will probably meet Bid Morse and her new friend Helen Bare, who are enrolled at \$20 per day for the five days the center is open.

The program will also be available to others in the community who wish to come but may not have transportation, said Keeler. The program will be able to accommodate as many as 30 participants per day as soon as someone donates a van or funds to buy a van to transport them to and from the program.

Once there, he said, clients are welcome on one or all five days of the program, based on an evaluation of their needs by a trained social worker. When accepted, they are provided with care from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The program, said Keeler, combines health and social maintenance services to help the frail older person maintain some form of independence even if he, or she, isn't capable of independent living.

And no one need think that Sheltering Arms is a depressing place, added staff health coordinator Annie Lahey, a licensed practical nurse whose specialty is geriatrics.

"The elderly provide the humor," she said with a chuckle, looking across the attractively and comfortably furnished activities room in which Bid and Helen were telling volunteers Arlene Naas of Royal Oak and Olga Frenagan of Birmingham their ideas about what constitutes an attractive man.

"THIS ISN'T a warehouse," said Keeler, who added that one day he hopes to see the program expand to a size that will require its own building. In the meantime, he said, Sheltering Arms can care for as many as 30 individuals at its present location with help from a professional staff of five and 30 volunteers who have been trained to care for them.

"I'm trying to build a success of this program," said Keeler, "because I can see that it is going to be extremely important to the community and the fam-



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Ninety-year-old Bid Morse enjoys a game of dominoes with volunteer Arlene Naas (center) and program coordinator Carolyn Darling

of Sheltering Arms, a new center offering day care for the frail elderly.

ilies of these people." An important by-product of the service, he explained, is the help it provides to those who are responsible for caring for the participants. Their sons, daughters, husbands or wives and interested friends need to have a break from the constant care that they require.

The proposal for the program, Keeler said, includes a significant observation that the potential for abuse or neglect is highest among the chronically ill older adult population when a person is isolated from outside contact and when the potential abuser feels overwhelmed by the lack of support from others in caring for a dependent person. Sheltering Arms will reduce the potential of abuse or neglect, he added, by increasing the dependent person's social contacts and providing support and respite for the care-giver.

BIRMINGHAM, he added, is an ideal location because it is easily accessible. "And," he added, "because this building is in an attractive location that allows the elderly to look out the windows and see things happening."

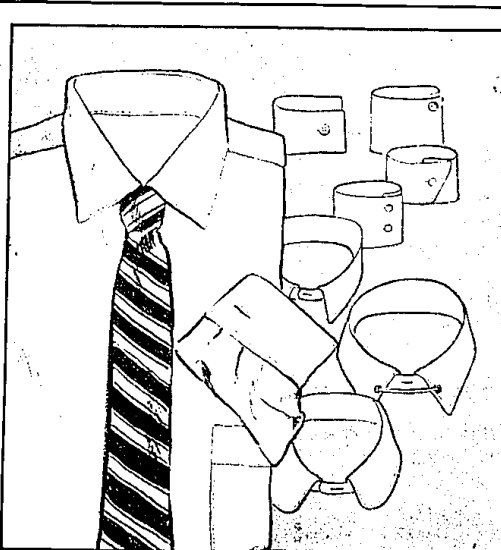
Another plus, he said, is that it can easily be catered with hot meals from the senior citizen nutrition program serving the Birmingham area. Sheltering Arms is partially funded by the Archdiocese of Detroit with additional funding from the Skillman Foundation, the MacGregor Fund, the Gannett Foundation and the United Way of Pontiac-North Oakland, said Keeler.

"Our theme is professionals serving persons of every creed. It is a non-offensive, non-political program that serves the community."

And, said Keeler, although the fee is \$20 per day, the participant's income is considered during the evaluation. "If needed," he said, "they look for sponsorship in the family. If it's not there, we look for other help."

The important point, he said, is that the program is designed to delay inappropriate institutionalization and provide supportive services to the family and care-givers whose energy and resources are being depleted due to their daily responsibility.

For information about Sheltering Arms, call Keeler, 446-1040. For information about arranging an evaluation, contact Leo Blayer, 548-4044.



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VAAL art classes set

The Visual Arts Association of Livonia (VAAL) will again be offering art classes at its new location at Jefferson Center, 9501 Henry Road, Livonia.

Starting the week of Sept. 12, day and some evening classes will be taught in basic drawing, figure drawing, watercolor, oil and pastel painting. For those artists who wish to work independently from a live model or to pursue individual artistic expression, studio sessions will be available for a

"Terrified beginners" to learn about computers

While the kids are in school this fall, moms are being invited to learn about computers at Madonna College, Livonia.

Billed as "for absolutely terrified beginners," two short workshops are scheduled.

"Computers for Moms" will meet from 9-11 a.m. Monday and Wednesday, Sept. 26 and 28. Moms will learn com-

puter games and exercises, have short lectures and movies related to computer functions and participate in hands-on operation of Apple and TRS-80 computers. An identical workshop is scheduled Nov. 7 and 9.

Fee for the workshop is \$20. For registration information, call the office of continuing education at Madonna College, 591-5049.