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Program for widows and widowers

Survivors aided in working through the grieving process

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

Linda Clark and Margaret Cotter team up to give a free introduction to a new support group for widows and widowers at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 27, in Farmington Hills Community Library.

The program is the first collaboration between the two, who offer a how-to-cope system for survivors after the loss of a loved one.

Clark, who said she had reached out to "just about every singles group in the Detroit metro area trying to find the answer" after the death of her husband, eventually found WISER (Widows in Service), which gave the answers for a while.

"But then comes the time to grow again," she said. "Phasing-out time and one-something-new time was upon me."

Further searching brought her into Cotter's classes on Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus, which are designed to help the depressed or the grieving work out of that state into a new lifestyle.

"A PROBLEM is a problem," Cotter said. "We don't sit around in my classes telling what caused the problem. How it came about is not the issue. We turn the change into a positive one and learn how to work at it."

The new group for survivors will

"Whatever the grief, there are stages one must go through if you want a normal healthy outcome. If you get hung up on any one of them and can't get from step two to step three, for example, abnormal behavior is going to develop."

— Margaret Cotter

combine Clark's experience as a teacher and with the widows she's worked with in a number of area social and support groups, with Cotter's expertise in helping private clients as well as students work through the grieving process.

"The big difference between this group and those who come to my classes is that we will be zeroing in on only adults who have the common problem of losing a mate," Cotter said.

Clark and Cotter said the most common stumbling block for widows and widowers is getting through the grieving process is the inability, and sometimes the unavailability, of help to get from one step to the next.

"Whatever the grief, there are stages one must go through if you want a normal, healthy outcome," Cotter said.

self-esteem."

As a very young widow, Clark voices her empathy for those feelings.

"Facing single parenting is overwhelming when you have a 12-year-old son. That long road ahead can be very frightening, and it was a while before I learned that I had to take care of me first. It was some time before I got it through my head that when I got all right he'd be all right."

Cotter believes some of the low self-esteem stems from today's socialization as well as religious training.

"We are taught that if we work hard, pay our taxes, go to church, vote, do all the things we are told we are supposed to do, then God will bless us."

"So when life hands us a sinner, the feelings creep in that we are being cursed," she said.

Pretending courage, or feigning grief, giving way into the poor-me syndrome; fantasizing that a mediocre marriage was one that was made in heaven; not forgiving God for not fulfilling expectations are other common pitfalls the two named as easy to fall into for survivors.

"The whole idea of our program is not to accept the crumbs, but go for the whole cake," Cotter said.

Farmington Hills Community Library is located on 12 Mile Road, between Farmington Road and Orchard Lake Road. Registration is not necessary.

Linda Clark, widowed at a young age, learned through trial and error how to arrange a new life for herself and her son. She brings her personal experience as well as her experience in working with other widows and widowers in WISER to the support group.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer



Margaret Cotter, who holds degrees in both mental health and social work, helps private clients in her Quakertown Medical Arts Center office, as well as those coming to her classes on Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus, get from one step to the next through the grieving process.

16 agencies join for Federation Fair

Residents of Oakland County are invited to challenge a computer, learn how to write a job resume and participate in a Freedom Run for Soviet Jewry as part of the activities planned at the upcoming Federation Fair in

West Bloomfield.

The event, sponsored by Jewish Welfare Federation and its 16 member agencies, will be held from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 25, in the Jewish Community Center, at Maple and

Drake roads. N. Brewster Broder of Southfield and Gayle Burslein of Franklin are the fair chairmen; Gloria Cohen of West Bloomfield is associate chairman. Pinna Basse of Farmington Hills is one of the committee chairmen.

The program is intended to create a greater awareness and understanding of the community services performed by federation and its agencies. At each display booth, visitors will be able to speak with agency staff and board members, collect informational materials, see films and slide shows, participate in workshops or watch demonstrations. Through these activities, the role of each agency in meeting health, education, recreation and other needs will be better understood.

There also will be a wide range of entertainment for every age group; a children's treasure hunt (prizes for all), teen disco, classical music performances and informal lectures on such topics as "Filles in the '60s" and "Dealing With Your Aging Parents."

A highlight of the afternoon at 1 p.m. will be the Freedom Run. Open to pre-registered runners and walkers, it is a symbolic demonstration of moral support for the Soviet Jew refugees, persons who have been severely penalized by their government for applying to leave. The course is one to six miles for adults, one mile for children in this event co-sponsored by Federation, the Jewish Community Center, Runners Club and the Detroit Soviet Jewry Committee of the Jewish Community Council.

Jewish Federation Apartment residents will show how to make authentic Jewish dishes at cooking demonstrations.

Jewish Vocational Service staff will teach job placement skills, lessons in resume writing and interviewing. A film about the agency will be shown.

Sinai Hospital staff will be screening tests for Tay-Sachs disease, blood typing and blood pressure checks.

United Hebrew Schools and Midrash College of Jewish Studies will have a computer game to play and a professional clown troupe called the Klassy Klowns will perform.

The fair's entertainment showcase will include dramatic readings by actors Shirley Benyas and Leo Mogill, and music performances by Annette and Julius Chajes, Nikolai Lemberg

and Alexander Rezin and the Senior Adults Chorus and Dancers.

There will be many door prizes, and the grand prize for pre-registrants only will be a year's membership in the Jewish Community Center.



Ethnic tales to tell

A something-new will be added to the 57th Original Old World Market in International Institute when Detroit Story League members entertain with folk stories from around the world on market days, Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 29 to Oct. 2. Storytellers Violet Altschuler (at left), a Farmington Hills resident and Doris Cooney, a resident of Redford Township, join ethnic entertainers and craftsmen at the market in Detroit's Cultural Center. Ethnic imports and ethnic foods will be on sale throughout market hours.

Career workshop offered

Exploring New Career Options, a one-day workshop in the technique of changing careers, will be presented by Oakland University Continuum Center from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 24, in Michigan Inn, Southfield.

Judith Hopkin, a personal and career counselor at the Continuum Center and in private practice in Birmingham, will conduct the workshop.

"It has become increasingly clear," said Hopkin, "that the person who gets the best job offer is the one best prepared in the strategies of changing

jobs. It's not necessarily the person with the most experience for the job."

Exploring New Career Options offers participants information about the secrets and tactics of career changing, and effective self-marketing. Hopkin will also present methods to help job seekers identify transferable skills.

Participants will have the opportunity during the day to hear directly from people who have already made successful career changes. Fee for this one-day workshop is \$40 and includes lunch. Registration is taken by Continuum Center office at 377-3033.

Golden year celebrated

Mr. and Mrs. John L. Ferko of Detroit celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Sept. 11 with a reception and buffet dinner for 55 guests in the home of their daughter. The couple were married Sept. 13, 1933.

The reception was given by their son Roger Ferko of Columbus, Ohio, and daughters Joan Herberholz of Farmington Hills and Carol Sullivan of Cincinnati. All of their six grandchildren attended the celebration.

INVITATION

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