

Living Center provides step toward independent living

By Jackie Klein
staff writer

DLANE AND Patty share a tidy, cheerful two-bedroom apartment in Southfield and form a sort of family. They take turns cooking and doing other household chores.

Diane volunteers at Children's World nursery school in Southfield and Patty is a volunteer at Oakland Care Center nursing home in Royal Oak.

Neither woman can take the pressure of a full-time job. But they never miss a day at the places where they donate their time, energy and devotion.

The roommates occupy one of the seven, two-bedroom units in the apartment complex for retarded adults on 12 Mile and Pierce in Southfield. It's the only facility of its kind in Oakland County.

Mary Wagner, executive director of Community Living Center (CLC), operator of the two-story apartment building, describes the complex as a training facility — a step between group-home living and independent, unsupervised apartment living for the retarded.

Four part-time aides help residents, who range in age 21-50, with menu planning, shopping, budgeting, banking and other duties. But the apartment dwellers are high functioning and don't require 24-hour-a-day supervision, Wagner said.

John has worked at K mart in Farmington Hills for 10 years. He recently graduated from his job as "door greeter" to shelf coordinator. John, a paraplegic, is a nimble-fingered organist.

John's roommate, Russel, is a janitor at

Mercy senior citizen center in Farmington Hills.

ALL THE RESIDENTS have jobs or go to New Horizons sheltered workshop in Madison Heights," Wagner said. "Many have hobbies, others attend weight control clinics or adult education classes, go bowling, out to dinner or see a movie."

"They're required to sign in and out if they're not accompanied by an aide. Residents also take turns planning leisure activities. We have a van to take them to work and on trips and the aides pick them up."

The main focus is to prepare these people for normal, independent lives in apartments they can afford, preferably in communities where they've been before and which are close to their jobs, Wagner said.

Residents come from CLC adult foster care facilities in Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Royal Oak and other communities.

After a year of training in the Southfield apartment, these residents are evaluated to determine if they're ready for independent living. Only about one-half will make it, Wagner said.

"Some of our residents come from group homes where there are 10-12 people, and they get someone sharing an apartment with just one other person," Wagner said. "But that's real life."

"THIS ISN'T a big hotel. We don't have a community room or a central dining room, but neither does a conventional apartment. Our residents can function well in their own units. They learn to knock on doors and respect each other's privacy."

Monthly rentals of \$437.50 a month for room, board and supervision in the fur-

nished apartment units are paid by Social Security, supplemental incomes and salaries.

Ira and Brad are roommates. Ira is the talkative one who works at Bill Knapp's restaurant in Southfield. He had just finished showering after putting in a big day helping with a few big parties at the dining spot. He said he got many compliments.

Brad, the serious, quiet one, goes to New Horizons for training. He makes airplanes, does woodworking and tends his aquarium while Ira takes care of the plants. They, as all other tenants, are encouraged to keep their apartments neat.

Muriel, a victim of cerebral palsy, shares a unit for handicapped residents with Michelle. They both work at New Horizons. Muriel, who uses a walker, supervises cooking chores because she's been there longer than Michelle.

"Cleaning and doing laundry is a big part of the training," Wagner said. "Each unit has a coin-operated washing machine and dryer and residents have to learn to get change."

A girl called "Patty the small" agreed to have her picture taken outside of the apartment. But, she said with a big grin, she'd rather pose with Barry Manilow, her favorite singer.

The apartment complex is well landscaped. Eight residents and staff members care of the lawn and shovel the snow.

Entrance to the apartment is from the back which causes no problems to neighbors, Wagner said. Because the building is located in a developed area, residents can walk or ride bicycles to nearby stores.



photos by MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Mary Wagner, executive director of Community Living Center, said the apartment facility for mentally impaired adults survived city council rejection and court battles before it opened in April 1983.

Facility for mentally impaired endured troubled beginning

The apartment house on the southwest corner of 12 Mile and Pierce in Southfield appears to be a quiet non-controversial building no different from others in the area.

But the two-story building which houses 14 mentally retarded residents is anything but non-controversial.

The apartment complex opened in April 1983 following a storm year of battles, city hall rejection and a law suit.

The following is a brief chronology:

• April 1982 — Southfield City Council members say they have a number of questions to ask about the project so they unanimously vote to delay action on the construction site plan.

• May 1982 — The city council votes 3-3 on the site plan. A tie constitutes denial of approval of the site plan. CLC sues the city in Oakland County Circuit Court charging discrimination, violation of civil rights, Southfield ordinances and state law.

• May 1982 — The chance for the 14 mentally retarded adults to succeed in a supervised, semi-independent living environment is restored. CLC wins the lawsuit.

• July 1982 — The city council votes 4-3 to file a complaint with the Michigan Department of Social Services to bar construction of the facility.

• July 1982 — The complaint is fruitless. The state has already approved a license application for the facility. CLC gets a \$100,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation of Troy to help build the facility.



Michelle (left) and Muriel work together to prepare a meal.

INSIDE ANGLES

Know someone doing something notable? Let us know. Write: Inside Angles, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024.

ROBERT BOND, son of Marlene and Robert Bond of Northville, has entered the U.S. Air Force's Delayed Enlistment Program. Robert is a 1984 graduate of Farmington High School. He will enter the Regular Air Force on Dec. 17. Following graduation from six-week basic training course at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, he will receive technical training in the mechanical aptitude area and be assigned to an Air Force duty station.

KATHY TOPPING, daughter of Marilyn Krispin of Farmington Hills and Robert Topping of Detroit, was elected Alma College 1984 Homecoming Queen. The 1981 Benedictine graduate is a dean's list student majoring in chemistry at Alma. Kathy is a member of Gamma Phi Beta national sorority, which she serves as vice president, and is a co-chairman of the sisters to Zeta Sigma fraternity. She is a four-time recipient of a Trustee Honors Scholarship, Alma's most prestigious competitive award. She is a member of Gamma Delta Alpha, a women's honorary, and Chi Mu Epsilon, a chemistry honor society.

AIRMAN RENAE R. CAMPBELL, daughter of Ralph and Ruth Deere of Farmington, has re-enlisted in the U.S. Air Force after being selected for career status. Assigned at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., she was approved for re-enlistment by a board which considered character and performance. Campbell is an aircraft fuel systems mechanic with the 33rd Component Repair Squadron.

A **HALLOWEEN SPECIAL** Event is being planned by Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation, Farmington Community Center, Farmington Community Library and Farmington YMCA, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 31. Activities include costume contest, movies, pumpkin carving/decorating contest, Trick or Treat down "Haunted Avenue" and more. The location for this event is the Farmington YMCA, 28100 Farmington Road. All Farmington area children are invited. No charge.

NICOLE BAUA, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Aigis Zaporackas and a graduate of North Farmington High School, was one of 12 students chosen by their peers for Albion College's Sequenential Homecoming court. Nicole is a freshman majoring in professional management.

CHRISTINE M. SOTNIK, daughter of Martha Prantz of Ohio and William Schaefer of Tennessee, has graduated from the Air Force non-commissioned officer leadership school at Mather Air Force Base, California. Sotnik is a telecommunications operations specialist with the 2049th Information Systems Group at McClellan Air Force Base, Calif. Her husband, Paul, is the son of Alex Sotnik of Farmington Hills and Helen Sotnik of Detroit.

SHELLY RAFFO, daughter of Mike and June Raffo of Farmington, recently became a pledge at the Theta Chapter of Alpha Chi Omega Sorority at the University of Michigan.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN a local hot spot raises money for charity? Everyone benefits. McFrock's of Farmington Hills, is known as a major singles gathering spot in Oakland County, but they also raised money for the following charities: Sarah Fisher Home, Lions Club, Special Olympics, Cystic Fibrosis, MD, March of Dimes, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Scamp Camp, and the Humane Society. A total of over \$8,000. McFrock's upcoming charity promotions include Multiple Sclerosis for October, the March of Dimes in November and they are sponsoring a food, toy, and clothing drive again in December for the Sarah Fisher Home.

FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL Golf Team defeated Walled Lake Central to become the Lakes Division Champions. The team qualified for state finals by coming in fourth at their regional meet. Participants were Gordon Wright, Keith Atkinson, John Borbi and Carl Borbi along with Mark Bailey, who set the FHS record this year with his score of 33.

BRIAN FERRIBY, son of Dale and Christine Ferriby of Farmington Hills and a 1984 graduate of North Farmington High School, is a member of the Michigan State University's Spartan Marching Band for the 1984-85 academic year.

JEFFREY RICCI of Farmington Hills is among four semifinalists from Catholic Central High School in the National Merit Scholarship program. These students placed in the top one-half of 1 percent of more than one million students who took the qualifier test last fall. Jeffrey still faces further competition in order to be one of the 5,500 finalists who will share \$18 million in scholarships.

DAVE RUZICKA, from Taco Bell, Farmington Hills, was granted an Appreciation Certificate from Michigan Rehabilitation Service for his record of and commitment to hiring workers.

SNOWMOBILERS CAN get a headstart on the season at the fourth annual Snowmobile Swap and Sale at Addison Oaks County Park from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Nov. 3 and 4. Individuals and dealers can trade and sell snowmobiles, equipment, suits, helmets and trailers. Frank Ostrowski, Addison Oaks park supervisor, says that the swap and sale is a perfect way for people to get the parts and equipment they need for the snowmobile season. Addison Oaks County Park is on West Romeo Road, in Addison Township. For more information, call 693-2432 or 658-0906.

INDEPENDENCE OAKS County Park will host "Invite a Bird to Dinner" from 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 3. This public interpretive program will explain how to attract birds to your home. Participants will be able to make a sample feeder at the program. Pre-registration is necessary. For more information, call 654-0903. Independence Oaks County Park is on Sahabaw Road, 2 1/2 miles north of I-75, near Clarkston.

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