

Group offers child protection suggestions

By Lori Gill
special writer

Speaking to a group of 100 Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members in Rochester, Marie Edenstrum, founder of Kids Everywhere Now Need You (KENNY), said, "The emotions you go through when your child is missing, no matter what age or for how long, cannot be described in words."

KENNY, a public awareness group to help protect children from abduction, was founded by Edenstrum in memory of her 14-year-old son Kenny Myers, who on July 16, 1984, was kidnapped while riding his bicycle.

Two days later his body was found in Hines Park in Westland.

The main goal of the organization was said to be educate the public in the prevention of not only abduction, but also the molestation of children. It is a non-profit organization funded by private donations and fundraisers.

"Edenstrum told the group of concerned parents, 'It is the public's responsibility to watch our children."

"We are a non-profit organization because I believe child safety should not cost anything."

SHE SAID she started KENNY to vent her anger about what had happened to her son.

Edenstrum was part of a panel discussion at the PTA's Region D fall workshop held at West Junior High School in Rochester Hills.

Five expert speakers joined the session explaining to the audience the problem of abducted and runaway children and what is being done about it at the state and local level. A question and answer period followed.

The speakers included Doak Bloss of the Michigan Center for Runaways; Judy Reynolds, an aide to state Rep. Mary Brown (R-Kalamazoo); Mark Wollung, the Rochester Police Department's liaison officer to the community schools; and Mary Jane Cipic, chair of the PTA's Missing Children Committee.

The all-day workshop, entitled "Caring and Sharing," included members from Southeastern Michigan. Helping

missing and exploited children is a statewide PTA goal.

Edenstrum spends at least five days a week speaking to school, community, church and civic groups concerning safety precautions and child safety tips.

"We work closely with the Adam Walsh Child Resource Center. The methods we use to teach children of all ages safety with strangers do not frighten them," she said.

KENNY PROVIDES adult training techniques that enable them to teach children safety rules with strangers. Elementary and pre-school presentations are also available.

The organization is developing a program for teen-agers, which will enable

them to recognize a potentially dangerous situation and how to cope with it.

KENNY is more than just a public awareness group. Edenstrum explained, members offer support for families and friends of missing persons.

Most recently, she said they were in contact with the Moore family when their son, Shawn, was abducted and murdered last month.

"The only thing you can do is offer the family emotional support and let them know you're there if they need you," said Edenstrum.

Not content to fight the battle of child safety alone, Edenstrum is asking help from Lansing. According to Judy Reynolds, the child protection package, which is before the legislature, has

been the subject of much controversy and concern at the state capitol.

THE PACKAGE, which includes nine separate bills, is designed to provide greater protection for children.

The legislation includes allowing the use of videotape in court proceedings for minors, revised penalties for child cruelty and torture, revised penalties for solicitation of minors in certain crimes and making in-state kidnapping a felony.

Along with the problem of abducted children, the runaway issue was also addressed by the panel. Doak Bloss and Mark Wollung blamed lack of commu-

nication as the biggest part of the problem.

"The community is partially at fault because they don't listen to the kids. We have to learn to take time and listen to them. Runaways are not a unique problem, and it is one that is not going to go away. It needs to be addressed now," said Wollung, who works full time in the Rochester community secondary schools as police liaison.

Bloss added, "Communication is our main goal. It is time to throw out the term runaways and refer to them also as missing children."

Hills seeks to solve drainage problems

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charge storm water by the road curb, said Tom Blasell, director of the city's public services department. In cases of heavy rainfall, the discharge is temporary and not that great. But problems arise in areas that have a lot of underground water where the sump pumps are always operating and spilling water onto the streets and sidewalks or neighbors' yards, Blasell said.

"IT IS JUST like you are building an ice fountain," Blasell said, referring to storm water discharge during the winter. "This, of course, is a hazard on the road itself."

Options available to homeowners whose sump pumps are not connected to storm sewers, "depend on the situa-

tion," Blasell said. In neighborhoods where storm sewers exist, homeowners can connect their sump pumps to the system providing the distance isn't too great.

In other cases, homeowners can "redirect" it to another area where it won't cause a problem," Blasell said. Costick also suggested regrading the land, or building a "rockwell" — a six-foot hole filled with rocks — to accommodate the excess water.

Although city officials are aware that some sump pumps are directly connected with sanitary sewers, Costick said there's no way to determine where that is occurring because it is under the basement. Discharging storm water through the sanitary sewer is illegal and costly for the city, he said.

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If you still believe in me, save me.

For nearly a hundred years, the Statue of Liberty has stood on the edge of the New World. America's most powerful symbol of freedom and hope. Today the ravages of almost a century of weather and pollution have left their marks. Corrosion has eaten away at the iron framework. New holes continue to appear in the copper sheets that form the exterior.

Less than a mile away, on Ellis Island where the ancestors of nearly half of all Americans first stepped onto American soil, the Great Hall of the Immigration Center is a hollow ruin. Rooms are vandalized, passageways overgrown with vegetation, walls crumbling in decay.

Inspiring plans have been developed to restore the Statue and to create at Ellis Island a living monument to the ethnic diversity of this country of immigrants. But unless restoration is begun now, ceremonies marking the hundredth anniversary of these two landmarks in America's heritage could be held in commemoration of national treasures that no longer exist. Sections of the statue have already been declared unsafe and closed to visitors. The \$230 million dollars needed to carry out the work is needed now.

All of the money must come from private donations: the federal government is not raising the funds. This is consistent with the origins of the Statue. The French people themselves paid for its creation. And thousands of American school children contributed to its construction and to the pedestal.

The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Commission appointed by President Reagan is asking every American business, every American citizen to join in raising these funds. The torch of liberty is everyone's to cherish. Could we hold up our heads as Americans if we allowed the time to come when she can no longer hold up hers?

One hundred years ago school children gave their pennies to put her up. Your dollars can keep her from falling down.

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