

Suburban Life

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(F3B)

Ground is broken

Well-wishers gather to cheer a very special play area

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

Students, staff, parents and a host of Cloverdale Training Center well-wishers, gathered for a short ceremony of groundbreaking, then drove away with bumper stickers reading "I've helped build a very special playground."

The broken ground marked the beginnings of a long time and \$50,000 dream that will give the students a custom-built playground that will be therapeutic as well as fun.

"We're better than half-way there," said Tom Calli, a Cloverdale speech therapist and member of the center's Playground Development Committee, speaking of the money goal. "And by September our students will be using the walkways to start their training for Special Olympics."

The walkways Calli spoke of will be 8-foot wide, to accommodate wheelchairs, surrounding an almost two-acre site on the east side of the building. Adaptive play equipment will be installed along the perimeter walk. Adaptive picnic tables will be placed adjacent to wheelchair parking spots, all centered beneath a 300-year old oak tree. A playscape will be one of the centerpieces of the play area.

Guests at the groundbreaking, who represented clubs and schools, businesses and service organizations, viewed the proposed plans drawn in frosting on a sheet cake during the reception.

CALLI ACTED as master of ceremonies for the event who told of the sometimes frustrating and many successful bowl-a-thons, candy sales and garage sale fund-raisers that got phase one of the playground under way.

High on the thank-you list were teens from the three high schools who staged swim marathons, a marathon dance and a volleyball marathon, "that were so well organized that the chaperons and advisors were left with nothing to do," Calli said.

Bill Greene represented Farmington 8 Lions at the groundbreaking, a club that has consistently given both time and money to the center. Other clubs on the thank-you list are The Vivians, Women of North Farmington, St. Ives Women's Club of Southfield, Farmington Community Lions, Farmington Coordination Council of Michigan and National Education Association, and Hill and Dale Garden Club.

Businesses thanked for their contributions were Colony Press of Royal Oak, Country Lanes, Radiator Hospital and Croissant Cafe, all of Farmington.

All told the contributions added up to \$30,000 in a year's time. Augmented funds came from a federal project for the handicapped.

The training center operates year-round with 85 students from 5-24 years who live with their parents, in foster homes or in group homes, in Farmington, Farmington Hills, Clarenceville, Southfield, Walled

Lake, Huron Valley, South Lyon and Novi.

CLOVERDALE provides intensive individualized training in all developmental skills with a high staff to student ratio to provide physical management while carrying out the prescribed educational training program.

Many of the students have multiple physical impairment. Some are wheelchair confined and require a great many supportive services.

Of all the specialized instructors that are within the center, Doug Smith, principal of Cloverdale cites the physical education teacher as one of the most important members of the staff.

"This teacher is responsible for an active development program, as well as an appropriate leisure time program," Smith said. "Both the instructional aides and program assistants are vital in carrying out this specialized plan for each student. A dream of the Cloverdale family — our staff and our parents — has been to create the play area to better meet both the physical education and recreational needs of all the students here," he said.

A mix of Cloverdale staff and Cloverdale Parent Group made up the center's playground design committee and fund-raising committee. Robert W. Ellis, a landscape architect with Ellis-Chad Associates in Pontiac, designed the playground. The first phase construction contract was awarded to F. J. LaFontaine & Sons in Farmington.



TANAKY BOST/Staff photographer

Midge Appel (at left), president of Cloverdale Parent Group, and Doug Smith (at right), principal of Cloverdale Training Center, hand areas will give the students more activities and the shovel to Michael Vettese, who broke greater independence ground for the custom-built playground that

The Handicapables

New group formed to share its assets and accent the positive

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

A new group called "The Handicapables" has been formed which focuses on individual assets, positive attitudes and the sharing of coping methods developed from each of the members' unique situation.

Chris Morrow calls those coping methods "our handicapabilities."

She calls the handicapable "a person who, though handicapped, is able and willing to share his or her unique gifts with others."

The Farmington Hills resident has a mailing list of about 20 now for the group which meets in Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church and wants to hear from others who share her philosophy.

"Whether our bodies are weak or strong, we all have gifts and the potential to help others," she said. "We need to allow ourselves to share our joys and sorrows."

The group is also open to those who live with a person who has some restriction in their life.

"It is not easy to live with someone whose condition requires your

attention, your care; whose ability to leave home is limited. These people have a commonality that can be shared for everyone's advantage," she said. "My husband comes to the meetings with me and so do others who live with someone who has a chronic problem."

MORROW HAS been in and out of school, in and out of work, in and out of hospitals most of her adult life.

"It's been an up-and-down road, but I did learn to cope along the way. I didn't enjoy a lot of it but I think I've got the knack of it now. Whatever I've learned can help someone else and whatever they've learned can help me. We can all learn together," she said.

"I've had MS (multiple sclerosis) most of my life but I still like me. I do the best I can and leave the rest with God."

Morrow suffered the first symptoms of multiple sclerosis when she was a student in Mercy School of Nursing.

"My eyes just kept closing. I just couldn't keep them open. Dr. Konrad advised to take a year off," she said.



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— Chris Morrow

Further attempts to get a degree took her in and out of Wayne State University, University of Detroit, where she got her bachelor's of social work, and Oakland Community College, where she earned her degree in mental health.

Jobs closed on her for lack of fed-

eral funding or because timing was wrong in the job market.

Meanwhile "I did tons of volunteer work. I couldn't stay still. I couldn't just not do anything," she said of her work in a half-way house, in a substance abuse center, with troubled youngsters and as a tutor for Bucket Brigade.

MEANWHILE she also had two children, "both against a doctor's advice and I'm glad I did," she said.

One of the things Morrow learned on her up-and-down road was networking.

"I learned about that at U. of D. and it made me an opportunist," she said. "I learned that you have to reach out and when you do, there is a lot out there that is available for you, a lot of services many don't know about, a lot of people willing to help. It's important that it all be shared."

Help to get The Handicapables started came from members of Christian Service at Morrow's church who are providing space for the gatherings, providing secretarial services and making some funds available.

"Nothing is concrete when you are forming a new group. Even the MS support groups are different from one another. We're still assessing The Handicapables needs. I'm their facilitator to get started, but this is their group. They'll have to speak out on what they want," she said.

THUS FAR she has had no trouble getting speakers, who have talked about a gamut of things, from legislation to recreation pertaining to those with disabilities, and she has amassed innumerable publications for dispensing information or for future discussions.

"Dispensing information is helpful, for all of us to enable us to help ourselves. The more you know the better," she said. "But so many of us have to learn that it's OK to be different. Everyone is not made the same way. We're all useful. We're all special."

Persons wishing to be placed on The Handicapables mailing list are asked to call the Religious Education Office in Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 474-8480. They will take inquiries at 477-8461.

Original inn owner's relative pays a visit

Getting in touch with one of the relatives of the original owner of Botsford Inn was one of the things benefits for Innkeeper John Anhut in his year of celebrating the Inn's 150th anniversary.

The occasion was Francis Leone Shelly's 88th birthday and a dinner party hosted by her family in the old stagecoach stop, where she met Anhut and recalled some of her memories of the inn while she was growing up.

Denice Bowman, a Farmington Hills resident and Shelly's granddaughter, arranged the dinner party after reading about the yearlong anniversary festivities in the Farmington Observer.

Shelly's great-great-grandmother was Olive Botsford, sister to Milton Botsford, the original inn owner.

Shelly and her party were given a tour of the inn, a copy of the anniversary book and some mementoes for the family to keep in their personal archives.

Historical researchers for the inn believe Shelly is the closest living relative of the original inn family.

The dinner party was made up of Bowman and her husband, Chuck; Shelly's son and his wife, Dr. Kenneth and Mrs. Shelly; Deborah Hecceg, another of Shelly's granddaughters and her husband, Alan G. Hecceg.

Francis Shelly is now a resident of Flint.



Innkeeper John Anhut greets Francis Leone Shelly, believed to be the closest living relative of Milton Botsford, the man who owned Botsford Inn 150 years ago.