



On the auction block

Fine prints and sports equipment, and hand-crafted and household items of numerous kinds go up for auction when the bidding starts at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow night in the Farmington Community Center. Doris

Harper (at left) and Barb Morton have collected some 250 pieces, ranging in price from \$5 to \$500, for the annual event to benefit the center. Admission is \$3, or \$5 per couple at the door.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Researcher studies parents with children, home and away

Parents whose children have moved out seem to live in the best of all possible worlds. They have minimal stress, feel their lives have meaning and are satisfied that life is generally meeting their expectations.

In fact, said Debra Umberson, a researcher at The University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, "they seem to be the group with the best mental health of us all."

Parents of children living at home, however, tend to be somewhat dissatisfied and under stress.

Umberson, who began her research in 1985 as a visiting scholar with the university's Center for Continuing Education of Women, has analyzed data on a national sample of 1,723 adults between 18 and 78 to determine how marital status and parenthood affect attitudes about life.

"It seems clear," she said, "that parenting does have an impact on psychological well-being. However, the study — which included parents and nonparents who were married, divorced or widowed — showed that

the effects vary according to marital status and living arrangements."

UMBERSON FOUND that the childless generally have a greater sense of daily well-being and feel more overall satisfaction with their lives than parents who live with children. On the other hand, they don't feel their lives are quite as meaningful.

"Married couples raising a family appear to be slightly more vulnerable to depression or low spirits than people without children. They may feel more tension and strain," Umberson said.

"The ages of children don't seem to make a great deal of difference," she added. "It seems that living with children of any age involves compromise and obligation, factors that can be detrimental to some aspects of well-being. All children, even adult children, require accommodation and create stress if they are under the same roof as their parents."

The crucial factor in daily well-being, she said, is living arrangements. If the children live somewhere else, at college or in their own

homes, the parents are happier, but they continue to feel that their lives are meaningful.

"That sense of meaning seems to carry over long after the children are gone," Umberson said. "Apparently, any negative effects of parenting on well-being are ephemeral and compensated for when parents become independent from their children."

UMBERSON ALSO found that, of all the groups in the study, divorced mothers who have custody of their children are under the greatest stress, presumably because they are unable to share the burdens of parenting.

"Divorced women without children are better off on every measure — daily well-being, life satisfaction and meaning to life — than divorced women with children," Umberson said. "Perhaps the freedom to pursue a job and seek new relationships after a divorce, without the worries of parenting, diminishes the sense of meaninglessness that people without children sometimes feel."

Camperships available for youth with asthma

Summer camp is a recreational experience shared by many youngsters but, for the child who suffers from severe asthma, trips away from home can seem like an impossible dream.

For an asthmatic child, summer is a season of being restricted to a controlled, allergen-free atmosphere always under a parent's watchful eye. It's a season of longing to be like

other kids, playing outdoors.

Camp Sun Deer, the free camp for asthmatic youth sponsored by American Lung Association of Southeast Michigan, hopes to change all that for some 70 youngsters this summer. Children chosen to attend the camp will be treated to the same experiences as youngsters who attend traditional camps. With the support of trained medical professionals who

closely monitor both the health of each camper and the wide variety of activities offered, campers will be able to broaden their experiences and enjoy a summer of activities and adventures.

Available to all Michigan children with severe asthma who are ages 9-12, Camp Sun Deer camperships are not awarded on the basis of financial need.

Camp Sun Deer will be open June 21-27 at Battle Creek Outdoor Education Center (Clear Lake Camp), Dowling. For information on applying for a free campership, call ALASEM at 569-5100, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Applications must be completed by parents and physicians and returned by May 15.

Coupon books

Farmington Head Start Parent Organization is selling Spree Discount Coupon Books to raise funds for the children's field trips and some additional educational programs. The books sell for \$8 and can

be purchased from 9:30 a.m. to noon Wednesdays in Alameda Early Childhood Center, Room 8, Power Road, north of 10 Mile.

Or, orders will be taken by calling Pat Clark, 471-3941.

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