



Foster families are needed for a new program that will offer homes to teen moms under age 18 and their babies. Sponsored by the Saint Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, the program's goal is to offer safe and nurturing homes to teens who would otherwise have nowhere to turn.

Foster care

Homes needed for teen program

By Rebecca Haynes
staff writer

WANTED: AREA FAMILIES to participate in a foster care program involving unwed teen mothers under age 18 and their infants.

This new program being developed by the Saint Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Farmington Hills will attempt to offer a caring, stable environment for these teens who often fall between the cracks, ending up on the street or back in an unloving home from which they originally ran.

"We really felt there was a gap in care, so we approached the state to see if we could get funding for a foster care program," said Wendy Lane, licensing worker and training specialist at the center. "Our residential program (for pregnant teens and teen mothers) starts at age 16, and there really isn't much offered for younger teens."

Marillac Hall, part of the center's complex, offers housing for pregnant teens unable to remain at home. This program accepts all ages but stipulates that the oldest resident can be no more than 16 years older than the youngest. Louise Hall is a residence for teen moms 16 and older.

"WE'RE LOOKING for foster homes in north-west Oakland County because of its proximity to Pontiac," Lane said, adding the Pontiac schools are one of the few districts that offer day care to allow the moms to continue their education.

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— Wendy Lane
Saint Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center

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Frequently these teen mothers are forced to give up custody of their child, and if they can find a home in which to live it isn't always a healthy one.

Barbara Tochet, program director for the center's foster care programs, said a girl under 16 is still a child herself.

"She still needs nurturing and mothering and generally isn't ready for independent living," she said. "It's really babies having babies."

"With this new program we can provide a service so the baby can grow up in as healthy and positive of an environment as possible," she said. "The foster parents can be there to nurture the young mother and teacher her how to be a mother herself. We don't want our foster parents to take over care of the baby. We want them to function more in grandparent roles."

PROSPECTIVE FOSTER parents may attend an orientation program at the Saint Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center tonight 6:30-9. The six-week training course begins Jan. 21.

"Foster parents for this program will have to fall under the same rules and regulations that any other foster parents would have to meet," Lane said. "Basically we'll do assessments of the family members and home environment, and we'll look at the family's motives for being foster parents."

Aside from looking for interested couples in the Birmingham, Bloomfield, West Bloomfield areas, the program organizers would prefer homes with few children so the foster parents have enough time to devote to the foster child.

"These teens have lots of needs and will need lots of attention," Tochet said. "Prospective foster parents need to be empathetic and non-judgmental of adolescents. People with grown children, who've already raised teens, would be good candidates."

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Plungers place is the stock market

By E. Dale Lee
special writer

There are no laggards in Birmingham's Plungers Investment Club, whose steady portfolio growth and zeal for annual-report research and analysis impressed Better Investing magazine enough to warrant placement on its investment club all-star team.

The Royal Oak-based national magazine has named 15 investment clubs across the U.S. to its team. The all stars serve as how-to models for other investment clubs, according to Dan Danko, editor of the investment trade journal.

Grant Ruttinger, the magazine reporter who profiled the top 15 all-star clubs, said the Plungers Club was picked because of a well-put-together "fun-and-learn quiz" and because it researches companies thoroughly before investing in them.

The five-year-old, all-woman club, which has 16 members from Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Franklin, invests \$20 per member per month in one to 15 stocks. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at members' homes.

THIS YEAR, the club portfolio's worth has ranged from \$29,000 to \$34,600, and leading investments are in American Family, American Home Products, Wal-Mart, Russell Corp. and ServiceMaster stocks, said Leona Gates, treasurer of the club.

"We don't buy on tips — we get ahead by investigating and studying," said Gates. "By doing that you don't get rich quick. We hope to dou-



Research is the key to success for the Plungers Investors Club. Seated from left to right are: Donna Dennis, Mary Ellen Johnson, Eva Miltr, Joyce Manby and Mary Jane Snow. Standing are Sally Janke (left) and Leona Gates.

ble our money in five years . . . and believe in investing for the long term."

The club consists of American Association of University Women members, all of whom are college graduates.

"Five years ago, the AAUW wanted women to have a working knowledge of business, money and how to manage it," Gates said. "Six other clubs like ours formed in the city at the same time. We've stuck with it, and we've done well."

"I felt I could benefit from this club by learning about the stock

market. I figure if you really want to learn about stock, you have to invest in it. It makes it more real."

ONE REASON for the Plungers Club's success is its purchasing prudence. In addition to extensive research on a potential investment, the club's members refuse to buy on margin.

This means the club can only lose the amount of money invested because it has not bought the stock on credit.

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